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THE VOICE OF BRITISH MOTORSPORT

MOTORSPORT NEWS

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The results are in! Check out who has won the inaugural Motorsport News gongs, starts **p19**

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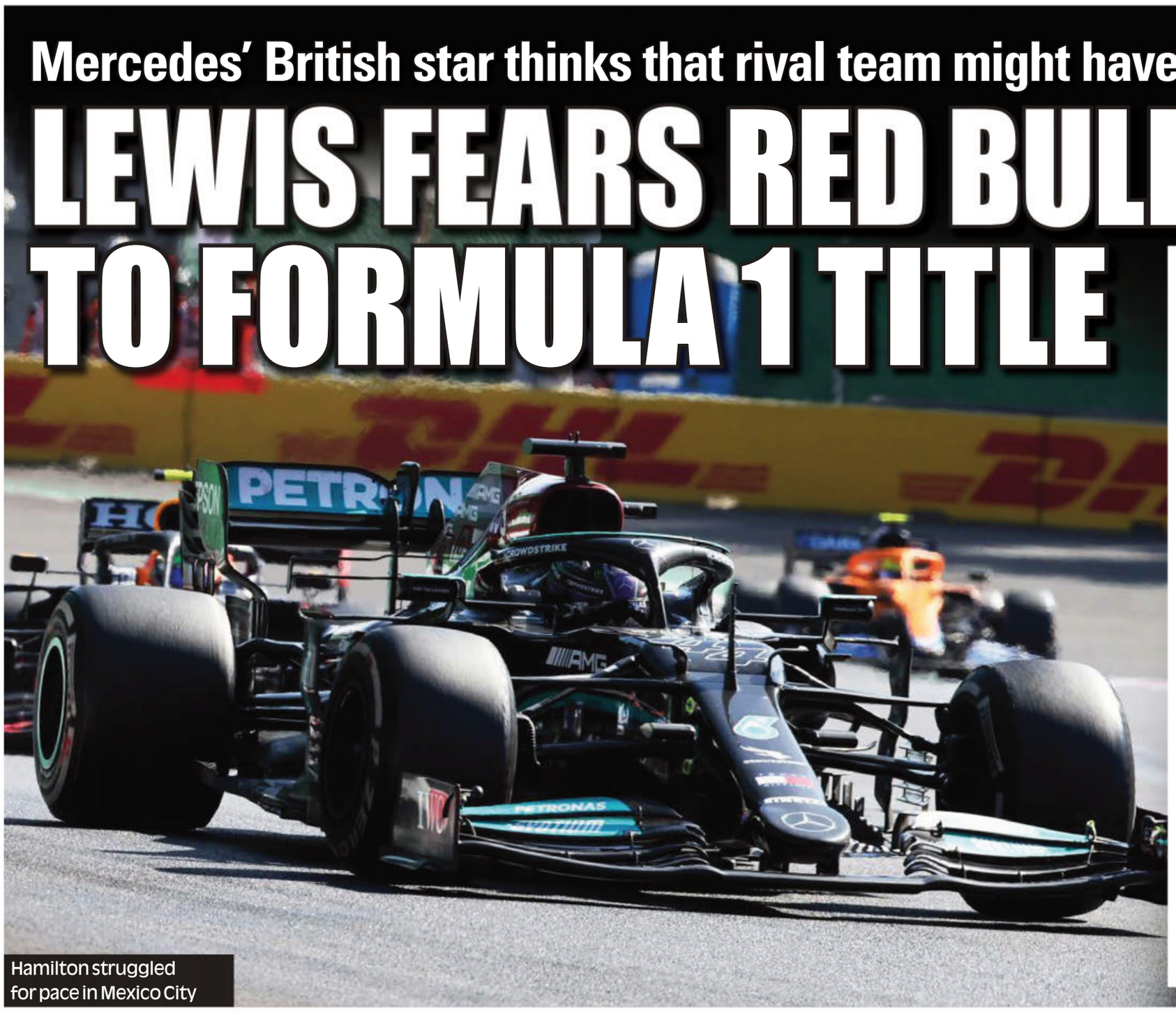
Mercedes' British star thinks that rival team might have the upper hand

LEWIS FEARS RED BULL CHARGE TO FORMULA 1 TITLE



Hamilton struggled for pace in Mexico City

By Matt James

World champion Lewis Hamilton is cautious on claiming a record-breaking eighth crown after once again being put in the shade by Red Bull rival Max Verstappen in the Mexican Grand Prix on Sunday.

The British driver battled to second place in Mexico City but had no answer for his Dutch rival, who claimed top spot at the opening corner and powered to a 16-second victory to extend his advantage at the head of the points table.

Verstappen's team-mate Sergio Perez put pressure on Hamilton at the end of the race and finished in third place.

Verstappen has upper hand

"There are still four races [to go]," said Hamilton, "[but] 19 points is a lot of points. And [Max]'s had a lot of wins. If they were to carry that on to the next ones, we will be in trouble."

Hamilton's Mercedes boss Toto Wolff said that he thought the British racer had outperformed the machinery last weekend.

"It was damage limitation for Lewis," Wolff said. "It was a really tough but great drive to be honest to hold on to second. Probably the car was only good enough for P3 today."

Full report, page four

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REPORT

BIRD SEALS THE OULTON GLORY

Fiesta man opens MN championship account **p14**

REPORT

ESTERSON LANDS WALTER HAYES WIN

Team USA man takes landmark Silverstone win **p38**

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COMMENT

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The Red Bull man put in an accomplished performance in Mexico City for victory

MAX LEAVES THEM BEHIND

The Mexican Grand Prix was hardly a thriller, but more of a stand-off between title chargers Lewis Hamilton and Max Verstappen. And, when the flag fell, it was very much advantage to the Red Bull man.

Even Hamilton's team boss Toto Wolff acknowledged that the silver machines were only really good enough for third place in Mexico City and Lewis's performance to drag second place out of his W12 exceeded what the car was capable of.

This shows how Lewis is extracting every ounce of speed from the Mercedes, and it also means that Verstappen's climb to the summit of the points table is, perhaps, even more meritorious. The Dutchman has not been gifted any buffer at the summit, he has fully earned it and he is racing with some real aplomb.

The four-race run-in for the crown is going to be fascinating and whichever of the two prevails to claim a World championship, they are going to have fully deserved it.

Elsewhere in this special issue, we look to crown some champions of our own with our very first Motorsport News Awards, in association with Cataclean. You, the public, have helped us to unearth our National Rally Driver of the Year and our National Racing Driver of the Year and we hope you are pleased with the results.

Our special tribute to all the winners begins on page 19, and it highlights some truly head-turning performances that have taken place over the last 12 months. Times might have been tough for everyone, but it is nice to applaud our winners and mark out their achievements.

This is the first of what will become annual awards for Motorsport News, and we hope that you will get involved in future decisions to help us highlight the drivers, machines and events that really matter.

We report on the opening round of the Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship, where Frank Bird got his campaign off to a winning start at Oulton Park, and we look at the action from the epic Walter Hayes Trophy at Silverstone, where the Formula Ford 1600 battlers put their best foot forward for the once-a-year showpiece.

We have the lowdown on the British Touring Car Championship support races from 2021, which have unearthed some stars of the future while also underlining some talents that had already come to the forefront. These are exciting times for motorsport.

Matt James
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MOTORSPORT NEWS

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IN THIS ISSUE

Verstappen turns the screw

Red Bull man goes on the rampage in Mexico

Neil Howard glory for Bird

Ford Fiesta man takes Oulton Park MN Circuit success

P19

The MN Awards are here!

We reveal all the winner of our first ever national awards

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We take the wraps off our first raft of winners from the 2021 season
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Perry Cooke tops the National Hot Rods

Esterson claims Walter Hayes glory

Young racer tops the Formula Ford 1600 stars at the Silverstone blue-riband event

Report: Mexican Grand Prix	4
News: Racing	5
News: Rallying	10
News: Historics	13
Report: MN Circuit Rally	15
Review: BTCC supports	16
MN Awards: Cover	19
MN Awards: Contents	21
MN Awards: Historics	22
MN Awards: Sporting Scene	23
MN Awards: National Driver	24
MN Awards: Rising star	27
MN Awards: National Rally Driver	28
MN Awards: Team	31
MN Awards: Organiser	32
MN Awards: Series	33
MN Awards: Event	34
Reports: Sporting Scene	36
Column: Nick Garton	37
Report: Walter Hayes Trophy	38
Column: Bobby Thompson	41
Reports: National Racing	42
What's on/readers photos	43

FOR MOTORSPORT NEWS STAFF CONTACT DETAILS PLEASE SEE P43

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FORMULA 1 REPORT: MEXICO

Photos: Motorsport Images

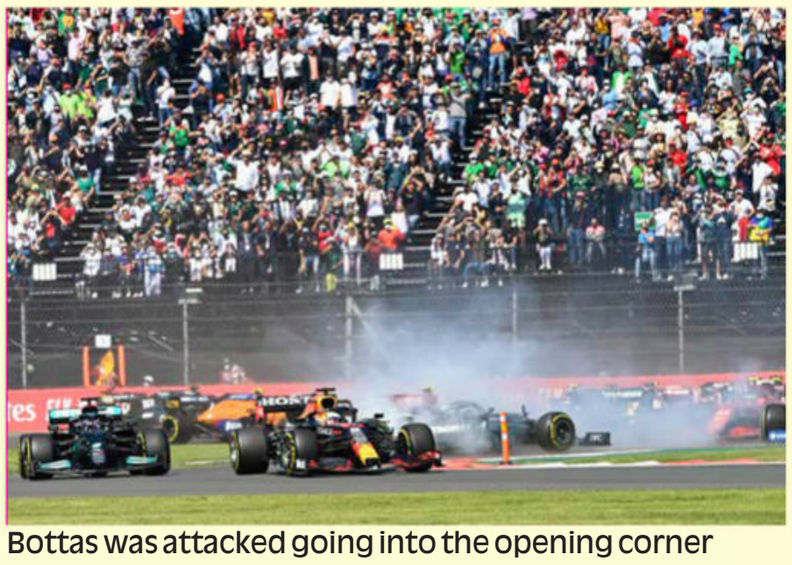
From lap 1, Verstappen was well in command

The Red Bull team celebrates a double podium finish

VERSTAPPEN SLICES AHEAD AS MERCEDES DUO FALTER

Dutchman controlled Mexico from the front. By James Roberts

Perez was the darling of the fans



Bottas was attacked going into the opening corner

The run down to Turn 1 in Mexico is the longest on the calendar and this was where Max Verstappen made his crucial move to secure victory last Sunday. When he braked into the first corner later than the two Mercedes on the opening lap, it gave him a clear run to command the race from the front.

It was ironic that a poor qualifying performance had left Verstappen only third on the grid, behind his title rival Lewis Hamilton and pole position holder Valtteri Bottas. But with the effect of the slipstream so strong on the long drag to the first bend, the start gave him the perfect opportunity to gain a tow from Bottas, pull out from under his rear wing and brake on the racing line to snatch the lead of the race.

Hamilton followed Verstappen in P2, but behind them mayhem unfolded as McLaren's Daniel Ricciardo locked up and tapped Bottas into a spin. With the field desperate to avoid hitting the Mercedes pointing the wrong way, it led to further contact as both Mick Schumacher (Haas) and Yuki Tsunoda (AlphaTauri) tripped over Esteban Ocon's Alpine and were stranded on the race track.

The safety car appeared so the Turn 1 shenanigans could be cleared up, with Bottas returning to the tail of the field, behind his nemesis Ricciardo. The interest in the race was then a split between the Merc up front and the other in 18th place.

After four laps behind the safety car, racing resumed and Verstappen started to incrementally ease away from Hamilton in the lead. The seven-time World champion admitted that he didn't have the pace to keep up with the Dutchman and his attention became focused on the second Red Bull, which started to appear larger in his mirrors.

Home hero Sergio Perez was enthusiastically cheered on by the thousands of passionate Mexican spectators who were eager for him to challenge Hamilton for second place. And their boisterous support grew even louder on lap 34. Hamilton had made his one and only pitstop on lap 30, which was followed four laps later by leader Verstappen pitting. Perez stayed out longer and inherited the lead to become the first ever Mexican driver to lead his home race. And the crowd went wild.

When Perez did finally pit on lap 40, he emerged 9.7 seconds behind Hamilton and had 31 laps to hunt down and try and pass the Mercedes. On his fresher rubber, Perez was much quicker than the British driver and had the gap down to 3.4s by lap 55. As the patriotic capacity crowd roared their approval, Perez got within DRS range 10 laps from the flag, but his charge thereafter appeared to stall as Hamilton kept the local hero at bay.

"I gave everything I could but there was nothing I could do about the pace of the Red Bull," said Hamilton. "Their pace was unbelievable and with Checo on your tail, it proves the car is quick…"

On his charge to become the first Mexican to finish on the podium at his home race, Perez set the fastest lap on lap 50. Then Verstappen grabbed that all-important bonus point two laps later.

At the back of the field, Bottas was having a troublesome afternoon. For lap after lap he tried but failed to overtake Ricciardo – who did not receive any penalty from the stewards for the opening-lap contact.

When Ricciardo pitted for new tyres, Bottas finally gained the position, but a slow stop put him behind the Australian once more. Then Mercedes decided to switch Bottas onto a soft tyre in the closing stages to snatch the fastest lap point away from Verstappen.

He did – on the final lap. It was the smallest of gains in an afternoon of damage limitation for Mercedes. With four races to go, their lead over Red Bull in the constructors' championship is just one point, while in the drivers' chase, Verstappen extended the margin over Hamilton to 19 points.

"This is an important win," said Red Bull boss Christian Horner. "It was a fantastic drive by Max who nailed the start and controlled the race beautifully. I thought Checo would give us a 1-2 but it was great to see him on the podium.

"This is the best team spirit we have ever had – but there is still a long way to go," added Horner. "We'll keep attacking, keep pushing and will maximise every opportunity."

F1 RESULTS

MEXICAN GRAND PRIX

Laps: 71 **Track:** Mexico City

	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	Max Verstappen	Red Bull-Honda	1h38m39.086s
2	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes	+16.555s
3	Sergio Perez	Red Bull-Honda	+17.752s
4	Pierre Gasly	AlphaTauri-Honda	+1m03.845s
5	Charles Leclerc	Ferrari	+1m21.037s
6	Carlos Sainz	Ferrari	-1 lap
7	Sebastian Vettel	Aston Martin-Mercedes	-1 lap
8	Kimi Raikkonen	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	-1 lap
9	Fernando Alonso	Alpine-Renault	-1 lap
10	Lando Norris	McLaren-Mercedes	-1 lap

11 Antonio Giovinazzi (Alfa Romeo-Ferrari) -1 lap; 12 Daniel Ricciardo (McLaren-Mercedes) -1 lap; 13 Esteban Ocon (Alpine-Renault) -1 lap; 14 Lance Stroll (Aston Martin-Mercedes) -2 laps; 15 Valtteri Bottas (Mercedes) -2 laps; 16 George Russell (Williams-Mercedes) -2 laps; 17 Nicholas Latifi (Williams-Mercedes) -2 laps; 18 Nikita Mazepin (Haas-Ferrari) -3 laps; 19 Mick Schumacher (Haas-Ferrari) 0 laps/accident; 20 Yuki Tsunoda (AlphaTauri-Honda) 0 laps/accident. **Drivers' championship:** 1 Verstappen 312.5 points; 2 Hamilton 293.5; 3 Bottas 185; 4 Perez 165; 5 Norris 150; 6 Leclerc 138. **Constructors' Championship:** 1 Mercedes 478.5 points; 2 Red Bull 477.5; 3 Ferrari 268.5; 4 McLaren 255; 5 Alpine 106; 6 AlphaTauri 106.

Hamilton was powerless to stop Verstappen's march

Sprint qualifying to become a feature at many grands prix in 2022

Formula 1 is set to increase the number of sprint qualifying races to six next season and could potentially expand the format to every grand prix in the future.

The third and final 'Sprint' of this trial year will take place at Interlagos this coming weekend, with the qualifying hour moving to Friday.

F1's managing director Ross Brawn says tweaks will be made to the format, such as increasing the points on offer or even having a separate champion for the points scored in the shorter-format races.

"We are taking it step by step and off the back of six we can decide whether we want to increase the number," said Brawn. "The overall weekend has improved so much that we are discussing with the teams how to make Saturday morning challenging and engaging."

It's expected that Silverstone, which will take place in early July next year, will again feature a Sprint race for the 2022 British Grand Prix.

Lewis wants a fair fight with Max as the hunt reaches a climax

Lewis Hamilton hopes this year's World championship fight won't be decided by an on-track clash between himself and rival Max Verstappen.

Speaking in Mexico last weekend, Hamilton said that he wanted to win the title in the "right way" on the track.

Speaking on the potential for a collision to decide the title, Hamilton said: "I've never won a championship in that way and would never want to.

"I'm here to win through sheer skill, determination and hard work."

From the opposing camp, Red Bull boss Christian Horner echoed Hamilton's sentiments adding he didn't want the title decided in a gravel trap. "We want a really fair fight and I think any driver would want to win the championship on track. We're a team of racers and if we can pull off this feat – and it's a massive, massive task – then we wouldn't want to win a championship through a collision between the drivers."

RACING NEWS

VERSTAPPEN NOT GETTING CARRIED AWAY WITH F1 POINTS ADVANTAGE

Dutchman has four races remaining to realise his World championship dream

Photo: Motorsport Images

Verstappen is nearing the title

By Matt James

Max Verstappen is refusing to say that he has one hand on this year's Formula 1 World title despite opening up a 19-point lead at the head of the points table with his ninth victory of the season in Mexico last weekend.

The Red Bull driver leapt from third spot on the grid to first at the opening corner by passing polesitter Valtteri Bottas and his Mercedes team-mate Lewis Hamilton. The Dutchman was untroubled thereafter as he powered to his second successive grand prix victory.

There are four rounds remaining in this year's competition and the year will conclude with the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix on December 12.

"It was all about braking late [at the opening corner]," Verstappen said. "I kept it on the track and that basically made my race. It's of course looking good but also it can turn around really quickly. But I'm looking forward to Brazil. I also have very good memories there."

Hamilton could not keep pace with the Honda-power Red Bull and was forced to look to his mirrors in the closing stages of the 71-lap race as Verstappen's team-mate Sergio Perez closed in. Hamilton managed to hold on to second spot.

The seven-time title winner said: "Their car was so superior this weekend that there wasn't really anything we could do about it. I am just happy to have second."

TARQUINI TO STEP DOWN FROM RACING

Italian legend Gabriele Tarquini has announced his retirement from front-line motorsport at the end of this season.

The 59-year-old, who started 38 Formula 1 grands prix and scored just a single point, has revealed that the final round of this year's WTCR contest on November 28 will be his last. The 1994 British Touring Car Championship victor with Alfa Romeo has been a winner in the WTCR series this year with Hyundai. Tarquini won the WTCR contest in 2009 and 2018.

"I feel very sad," said Tarquini. "After a long career that felt like it would never end, you think this moment will never come. In life, everything has a start and a finish and I am old enough to understand this.

"I don't want to thank all the people who have helped me in my long career, because I would definitely forget someone! The list is very long, starting with my family and finishing with Hyundai Motorsport. I want this to be my final manufacturer because we have done a great job together.

"I don't want to stop driving completely, as racing is like a drug. I will need to be slowly weaned off as I can't go from 100% to nothing. I'm also speaking with Hyundai Motorsport to see if we can have a different relationship in the future."

The '94 BTCC winner is stepping down from racing

Toyota finished 1-2 in the WEC season finale

CONWAY ANCHORS TOYOTA CREW TO ENDURANCE WORLD TITLE

Briton Mike Conway has secured back-to-back World Endurance Championship drivers' titles as his Toyota crew after a runners-up finish in the season finale in Bahrain.

Conway, who led the first stint in the Hypercar he shared with Jose Maria Lopez and Kamui Kobayashi, was asked to cede first place to the faster sister GR010 of Sebastien Buemi, Kazuki Nakajima and Brendon Hartley. The champions elect kept the pressure on and eventually finished seven seconds behind in the eight-hour event.

Conway said: "It feels really good to join the club of double World champions. To win the title two times in a row is an amazing feeling, and finally getting Le Mans this year really does top off the season."

A third win in a row handed the LMP2 honours to the WRT combination of Ferdinand Habsburg, Charles Milesi and Robin Frijns, while there was controversy in GTE Pro.

Ferrari and Porsche had gone toe-to-toe with the AF Corse 488 GTE of James Calado and Alessandro Pier Guidi winning the race and the crown after late contact with the Porsche of Michael Christensen, who was sharing with title-chasing team-mates Kevin Estre and Neel Jani. The Ferrari crew was initially ordered to give the spot back to Porsche but failed to do so. The incident was investigated and will be heard in an FIA court.

AF Corse also defended its GTE Am title as Nicklas Nielsen, Francois Perrodo and Alessio Rovera took a fourth victory of the season.

ANDRETTI'S DEAL WITH ALFA ROMEO IS OFF

Andretti Autosport's plans to take over the Alfa Romeo entry in Formula 1 have stalled, with bosses of the American outfit blaming problems with control of the squad as the reason.

The Alfa Romeo firm branded the Sauber-owned entry in 2019, Andretti Autosport, which runs operations in American racing, Formula E, Extreme E, sportscars and Supercars in Australia, has expressed a desire to move into F1 and was in talks with the Swiss-based team.

However, the brakes have been put on a deal for the foreseeable future. Team head and former McLaren F1 driver Michael Andretti said: "I'd like to put an end to some of these rumours that the deal fell through because of financial reasons. That couldn't be further from the truth. It had nothing to do with that. It came down to control issues in the final hours of the negotiations. That's what killed the deal. I've always said if the deal isn't right we won't do it and in the end it wasn't right. So we continue to look for other opportunities."

Alfa has already signed Valtteri Bottas to lead its team next season and expects to announce the incumbent of the second seat – the final vacant cockpit for 2022 – at the Brazilian Grand Prix this weekend.

Andretti will not take control of the Alfa Romeo F1 squad

IN BRIEF

Porsche eyes F1

Bosses of Porsche have indicated that the changing landscape of powerplants in F1 has rekindled its interest. With grand prix bosses looking to ditch hybrid recovery and exploring more ways of electrification, the German car firm is eyeing a 2026 motor. Porsche's vice president of motorsport Thomas Laudenbach said: "A lot of things are going to the right direction concerning F1 – how important is electrification or the electric part of the powertrain."

Williams misses out

Williams will not take part in the end of-season F1 rookie test in Abu Dhabi, head of vehicle performance Dave Robson has confirmed, due to a lack of resources. The British team, which is owned by Dorilton Capital, will instead concentrate on developing its 2022 car at the factory. Robson said: "We don't have a mule car and that stops us from running at the test. We know that the mule car would have been beneficial but unfortunately, at the time we had to commit to that, we just didn't have the resource to do it."

Antonia Terzi

Former Ferrari and Williams aerodynamicist Antonia Terzi was killed in a road accident in the UK last week. One of her most notable contributions was the Walrus-nosed Williams of 2004 when she held the role as chief aerodynamicist. She went on to work for Bentley before pursuing a career in education. She was 50 years old.

Tyres on track

Bosses of Pirelli say they are on schedule with new tyres that will be required for grand prix machines next season. In addition to making lower profile tyres that fit 18-inch wheels, there were demands that the Italian firm's new tyres were longer lasting and easier to get into the operating window to cope with the demands of the new-for-2022 machines. Pirelli F1 boss Mario Isola said: "We tested on 'mule' cars so we have to validate the results on the 2022 cars. We design a range of compounds centred on the performance we are expecting for the following year. In any case, the compounds are completely new because we decided to change the philosophy to meet the targets."

No oval for Nico

After testing an Arrow McLaren SP IndyCar recently at the Barber Motorsports Park in Alabama, Formula 1 refugee Nico Hulkenberg has decided against switch to the US-based single-seater category in the future. Writing on social media, the 2015 Le Mans 24 Hours winner said: "Quick update regarding IndyCar: It was exciting to test an Indycar two weeks ago and I am grateful to Arrow McLaren SP for this opportunity. However for personal reasons I decided not to go ahead with it. [I will] keep you posted on my future plans."

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RACING NEWS

LIND FAILS IN WALTER HAYES TROPHY ENTRY EFFORT

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Porsche Motorsport

The reigning British GT champion couldn't follow up Festival showing with Hayes appearance due to lack of funds

Lind was classified ninth in the recent Festival final

Lind and Magnussen "laughing and smiling" throughout Festival

By Graham Keilloh

Reigning British GT champion Dennis Lind failed in his effort to follow his recent Formula Ford Festival appearance with a Walter Hayes Trophy outing last weekend due to funding.

The 2010 Festival winner on the Monday after his latest Festival weekend stated on Twitter he was seeking a second FF1600 showpiece outing at Silverstone's Hayes event the following week.

However he subsequently told Motorsport News: "I did try for the longest time but I set myself a deadline with Andy [Low, Low Dempsey Racing boss] yesterday [last Tuesday] because there's no point in running around like a headless chicken looking for money.

"Also I can't really exploit my friends and sponsors that much, or the people who are willing to help out, because one day if I really need it they'll just say no because we spent all our money on Formula Ford already,and I'll be like s**t that's not really what I needed it for was it?"

Lind reiterated his and his uncle Jan Magnussen's intention to return to race in next year's Festival: "We both enjoyed it so much and if we had a few more days of testing we would have been right up there," Lind added.

"Going back to where you started is a huge emotional nostalgia trip. Ever since Jan and I met each other at Copenhagen airport to go there we've been laughing and smiling."

US STAR ESTERSON WANTS GB3 IN 2022

Walter Hayes Trophy winner American Max Esterson wants to remain in the UK next season and compete in the GB3 championship.

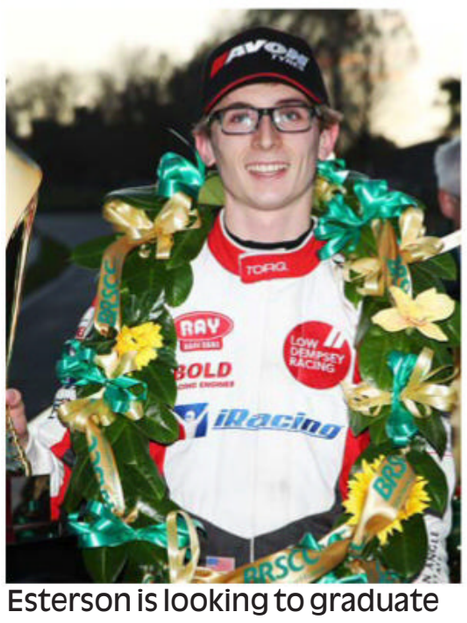
Esterson, 19, competing with the Team USA Scholarship, whose alumni include two-time IndyCar champion Josef Newgarden, won the Hayes at Siliverstone a week on from finishing second in the Formula Ford Festival after starting its final 13th. He also who finished third in this year's National FF1600 championship

Esterson told Motorsport News: "Hopefully [I'll race in] GB3 [in 2022], so trying to sort that out but nothing finalised yet."

Esterson also got to sample Douglas Motorsport's GB3 machinery at Bedford Autodrome in the week between the Festival and Walter Hayes Trophy alongside fellow Team USA Scholarship racer and Festival third-place finisher Andre Castro. Esterson first drove a GB3 car earlier this year.

On his Festival final showing, Esterson added: "I think we were the only cars on new tyres, that's why we slipped back a bit in the semi because we were on used tyres. I was the quickest car probably [in the final], any gap I had I went for it. Coming from 13th it's pretty good, Brands is known to be hard to pass at.

"Hopefully I'll be back in the Festival next year too, I'd like to do it."



Esterson is looking to graduate

HOLLAMBY SEEKS MODERN FF1600 RACES

Former British Touring Car Championship team boss Shaun Hollamby is tempted by further Formula Ford outings in more modern machinery after his Jamun T3 category debut in the Festival.

Formula 1 TV director Hollamby, whose widespread racing experience includes more recently racing his dad's Classic F3 March 803, in his Jamun at Brands Hatch finished second in class in the historic final.

He told Motorsport News: "[It was a] fantastic weekend. We've ironed out a few problems with the Jamun, Pete Alexander from PA Motorsport has worked over the top to get it right. We just made the car better and better with every session.

"[It was my] first time ever in a Formula Ford so it took a little bit of getting used to but I loved it. You never know, I might get a slightly newer car for the Festival next year and maybe do a few Champion of Brands races. It's really really good fun, the driver has a lot of input. [I could] look to do it next year maybe alongside the Formula 3."

Hollamby made Jones tribute

Hollamby's Jamun livery also included a tribute to late long-serving Brands commentator Brian Jones: "I've known Brian since I was a child coming here. He helped so many people."

MILLS LOOKS FOR BACKING FOR HOPED-FOR GB4 MOVE

Formula Ford rising star Tom Mills has said he requires backing for his hoped-for moved to GB4's new junior single-seater contest with Kevin Mills Racing next season.

The 16-year-old son of team boss Kevin made his car racing debut earlier this year, and fought for Festival victory but was the innocent victim of a multi-car crash.

Tom told Motorsport News: "As things stand I'm doing this [FF1600] next year but if I get more backing GB4 is a possibility. I don't want to get my hopes up in case it doesn't happen but with the help of a few very kind people it could happen.

"GB4, the cost seems to be reachable for normal people. Actual F4 is out-of-this-world money. If I keep looking really good in this [FF1600] then they [backers] are more likely to do it."

KMR and fellow FF1600 squad Oldfield Motorsport are among those intending to enter GB4 next year. Kevin added: "If we can get the funding we'll run Tom and a customer [in GB4], if not Tom will continue this [FF1600] and we'll run two customers. I've had already quite a bit of interest. If we don't get the funding for Tom he'll try and win the National [FF1600] championship."

HART GT AND IN2RACING LATEST TO LINE UP GB4 ENTRIES

Hart GT and In2Racing have taken the number of teams intending to race in next year's GB4 junior single-seater championship's inaugural season to 10.

Hart GT has recently raced in the Ginetta GT4 Supercup and Radicals, and British Touring Car Championship star Tom Ingram is a graduate of its karting operation. In2Racing meanwhile claimed a title treble in last year's inaugural Porsche Sprint Challenge GB championship.

A statement by the GB4 championship added that "several other teams and privateer entrants continue to evaluate moves into GB4, with further announcements expected in the coming weeks."

Tatuus F4-T014 cars for GB4's debut year meanwhile are available for purchase now by competing GB4 squads.

GB4's organiser MotorSport Vision has acquired 16 cars plus spares for resale from mid-November while further chassis are available from teams that have been competing in the Italian, Spanish and German ADAC Formula 4 contests.

In2Racing took Porsche sweep

Mills: looking for GB4 budget

RACING NEWS

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Italian GT Championship, Mission Motorsport, BRSCC

ADAM "DESPERATE" FOR FIFTH BRITISH GT TITLE

Adam says British GT partnership with Howard still has championship-winning potential

Adam seeks fifth title

Adam and Howard: '15 champs

By Graham Keilloh

Four-time British GT champion Jonny Adam is "desperate" to win a fifth crown and believes his title-winning Beechdean Aston Martin partnership with Andrew Howard still has championship potential.

Adam returned to British GT this season rekindling his 2015 championship-winning partnership with Howard. The pair were in the championship reckoning for much of this year, though Adam lost his own chance when he missed the Spa round with Covid then Howard's charge faltered after an Oulton Park qualifying crash.

Adam told Motorsport News: "I'd love to come back to British GT [in 2022] because it's sort of unfinished business. I still think there's a championship there to be won somehow, trying to get to the detail and really improve our package for next year. And if Andrew was to come back next year, which no decision's been made at all, but all these guys they enjoy British GT if they're fast and successful and there was flashes of that this year with us. We just need to get it better everywhere.

"I'd like to come back to British GT and potentially have a go again, but it just needs to be like it was this year, the right package.

"I'm desperate to win a fifth championship, whether it's with Andrew or someone else. It's been a few years, 2019 was the last time I won with Graham Davidson. And I still think there's potential, as a package to do it just all needs to be all put together cleverly to try and get that to happen."

CLIO 750MC CONTEST GETS EXTRA CAR AND REBRAND

The 750 Motor Club's Clio 182 championship will be rebranded as the Clio Sport championship from next year with the introduction of the 197/200 generation chassis to the category.

The new model, introduced after extensive testing with technical partner K-Tec Racing, will compete head to head with the existing 182-generaton Renaultsport Clio in the championship that has run for six seasons as a 182 standalone formula. The 197/200 is viewed as an alternative rather than a step-up, with control parts and a minimum weight intended to ensure the new car matches the lap times of the 182.

Draft regulations, along with details of a foundation programme bundle entry package, will be available shortly.

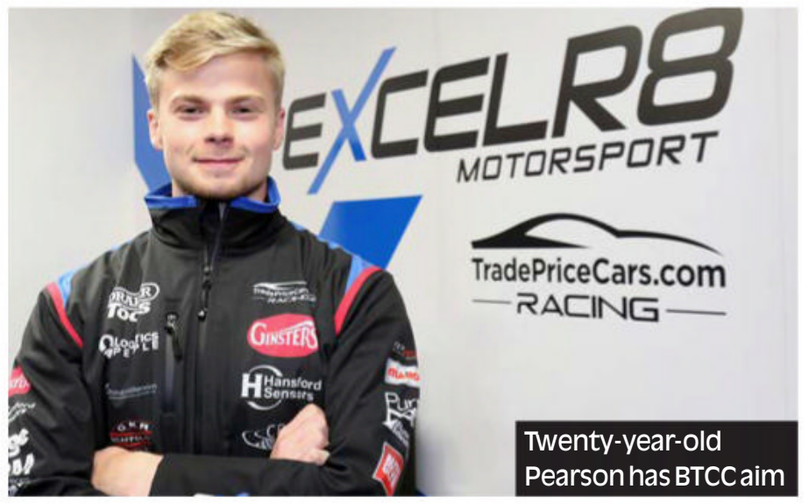
BTCC HOPEFUL PEARSON JOINS EXCELR8 MINI SQUAD

Promising Mini Challenge racer Ronan Pearson will switch to leading outfit Excelr8 Motorsport for 2022's championship as a step towards his aim of racing in the British Touring Car Championship.

The 20-year-old Fife racer finished eighth in this year's Mini Challenge standings driving for LDR Performance Tuning. Now for his third season in the category he joins Excler8 which has won the championship for the last two seasons and has more than 20 Mini Challenge titles.

Pearson also follows in the footsteps of new Mini Challenge champion Dan Zelos as the latest member of Excelr8's BTCC young driver programme. This gives Pearson the chance to forge close ties with Excelr8's BTCC team and he'll test its race-winning Hyundai i30 Fastback N in the new year.

Pearson said: "This deal gives me a great chance to fight for the championship next season, which has to be my goal going into 2022. With my ultimate aim being to follow people like Gordon Shedden and Rory Butcher into the BTCC in the future, the opportunity to work closely with the touring car team is one that I fully intend to take with both hands. It moves me a step closer to where I want to be."



Twenty-year-old Pearson has BTCC aim

Middleton just missed title despite fine showing

MIDDLETON JUST MISSES ITALIAN GT CROWN

Young British racer Stuart Middleton narrowly missed out on winning the Italian GT Endurance championship in his first year racing in GT3 despite a fine drive in Monza's three-hour finale.

Middleton, 22, in his middle stint of the Monza race late last month built a lead of more than 42 seconds for the Imperiale Racing Lamborghini Huracan that the British Racing Drivers' Club Rising Star shares with Andrea Amici and Alberto Di Folco.

However amid rain in the final hour Di Folco made a late stop for wet-weather tyres while the eventual title-winning Audi R8 stayed on slicks which meant it beat the Lamborghini to race victory. The result also meant that Middleton's entry finished second in the table.

Middleton said: "I'm a bit gutted, but we gave it absolutely everything and it's been a fantastic first season for me in GT3. It was a tough call at the end with the pitstop to change Alberto onto wets, it's a difficult way to lose the race and the championship but if the Audi had finished second we couldn't have won the title anyway."

FIESTA JUNIORS GET NEW MK7 CAR

The British Racing and Sports Car Club's Fiesta Junior championship will get a new Mk7 car from next season to race alongside its Mk6 models to improve availability and costs.

The junior contest has recovered from having only a four-car grid in 2019 to achieve a best turnout of 16 this year. Next season the 1.6-litre Sigma-engined Mk7 will be eligible for the contest.

BRSCC's head of formulae development Greg Graham said: "It was apparent that the current model was causing restrictions in terms of availability of suitable donor cars and good ready-to-race stock, not helped by some complexities in the parts supply chain, and the perceived costs related to building new competitive examples."

Mk7 is unveiled for 2022

RACE OF REMEMBRANCE GETS FULL 51-CAR GRID

This weekend's Race of Remembrance will for the first time in the event's eight-year history have a full grid of 51 cars.

The 12-hour endurance event at Anglesey circuit built around a Sunday morning remembrance service returns as an on-track event this year after being called off in 2020 due to Covid, though online-based activities still took place then.

The event is run by the Mission Motorsport charity that supports service veterans' rehabilitation via motorsport.

In addition, places on the inaugural RoR Karting race, taking place on Sunday at Thruxton Kart Centre, are also sold out. Organisers are now operating a reserve list for both races.

Endurance race is built around remembrance service

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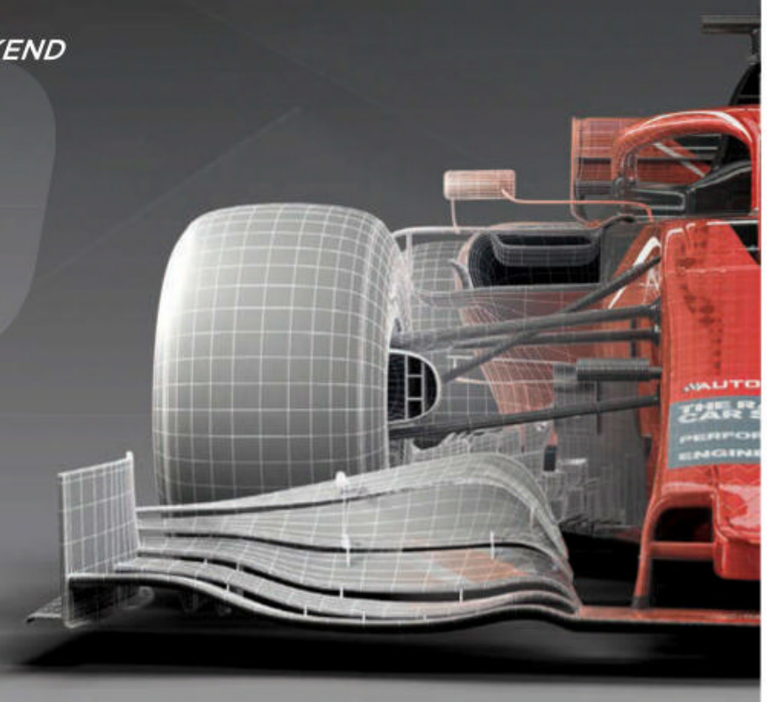

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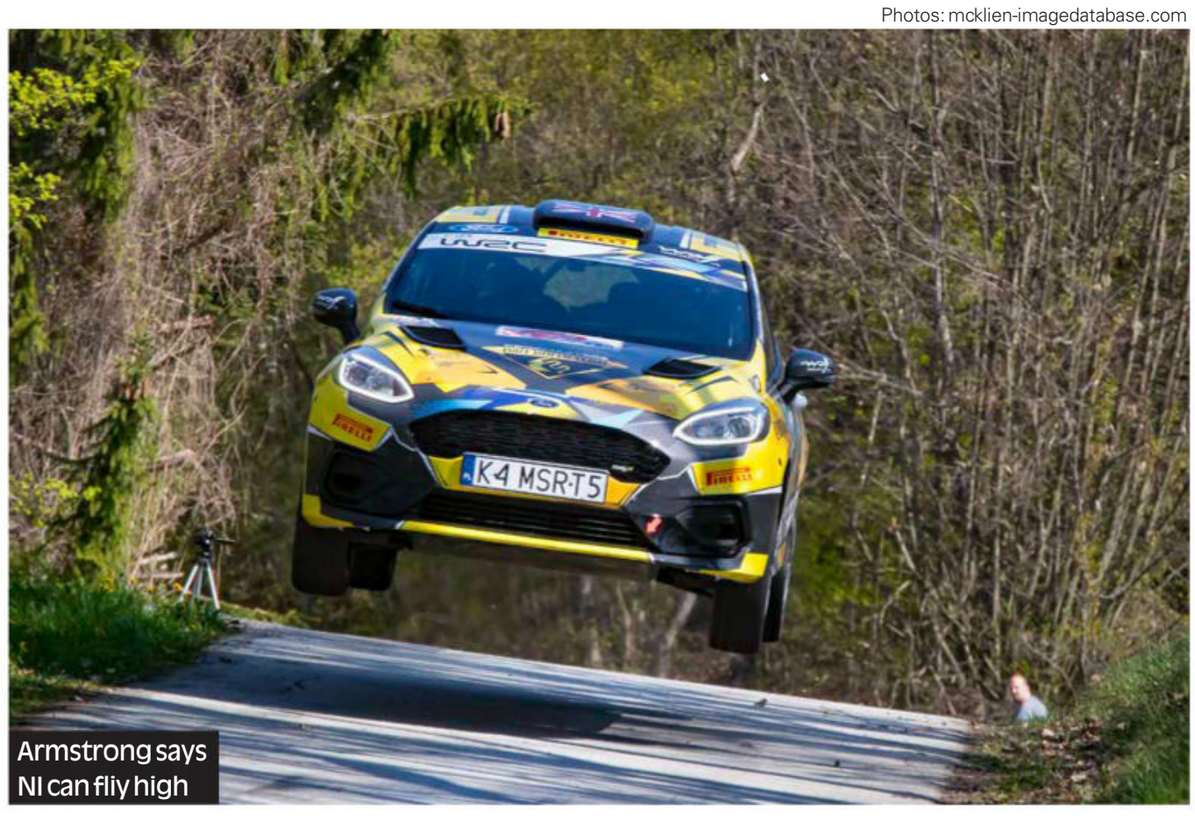


Armstrong says NI can fliy high

Junior WRC frontrunner says that a rally in the province would be a huge success

By Graham Lister

Jon Armstrong is the latest leading Northern Irish rally driver to throw his weight behind his country's bid for a World championship round next season.

The asphalt counter is the favourite to fill the vacant slot on the 13-event 2022 calendar providing hoped-for government funds materialise.

And Armstrong, who finished runner-up in the Junior WRC this season, believes Rally Northern Ireland head Bobby Willis is the man to make it happen.

"There's no doubt about it, Bobby did a great job whenever he had the ERC on the Circuit of Ireland and Bobby and his team would be more than capable of doing a great job in the WRC," Armstrong said. "It would be a fantastic event, especially at that time of the year [August] because hopefully they will have better weather than in previous years."

Armstrong added that while it's not clear what championship he'll contest next season, he said a Rally Northern Ireland entry in a Rally2 car would be "a dream come true" if it were to happen.

"The last time the WRC was in Ireland I was too young to compete so a WRC event at home would be amazing and we might end up trying to get there in a Rally2 car."

Earlier this year, Kris Meeke, a five-time WRC event winner, encouraged fans to complete an online questionnaire aimed at establishing possible visitor numbers should Rally Northern Ireland secure a World championship date.

"We have some great rally stages in Northern Ireland and now we have a chance to have a WRC round there too," he wrote on Facebook.

Johnston will remain alongside Katsuta at Toyota

JOHNSTON GETS THE NOD AS KATSUTA'S CO-DRIVER

Dan Barritt won't return as Takamoto Katsuta's co-driver after Aaron Johnston was confirmed as the Lancastrian's full-time replacement.

Johnston has filled the role since Rally Finland in early October when he was called up to replace Keaton Williams.

Northern Irishman Williams deputised for Barritt on August's Ypres Rally after Barritt injured his neck and back on a heavy landing on Rally Estonia in July, which has kept him out since.

But when Williams had to withdraw from the role for personal reasons on the eve of the Acropolis Rally, which Katsuta was unable to contest as a result, Johnston was recruited after he became available following his split with Oliver Solberg.

As well as contesting the Monza Rally with Katsuta later this month, Irishman Johnston can look forward to a full 2022 campaign alongside the Japanese driver.

Katsuta, 28, has been confirmed in the fourth hybrid-based Toyota GR Yaris WRC Rally1 in his role as part of the make's development programme.

He paid tribute to Barritt, who partnered him to a career-best second place on the Safari Rally in June: "I want to thank Dan very much for his huge support since 2016. Without it I wouldn't have achieved any of the good results we have managed together. He has given me so much advice and we had many fun moments, and we will still be working closely outside of the car."

Isle of Mull-based Barritt was part of Katsuta's safety note crew on Rally Spain last month but, as he told WRC.com recently, he's looking for another opportunity to continue co-driving at the top level once he's regained full fitness.

"I'm definitely not done with co-driving at that level," he said. "My fitness is 95 or 96%, but I've got to follow the medical advice here and that advice is not to get back in the car just yet.

"The rest I've had has really done me good and I want Daniel version 2.0 to be better than ever when he's back. I'll be honest, I'm really missing it. I'm really missing every aspect of the thing."

IRISHMAN McERLEAN HELPS HYUNDAI WITH RALLY2 DEVELOPMENT

Josh McErlean turned development driver when he took part in a three-day test for Hyundai in Italy last month.

The Irishman was on duty to sample a variety of set-ups on the all-new i20 N Rally2 with Teemu Suninen sharing testing duties.

According to Hyundai Motorsport Customer Racing, the extensive test "gave the department's engineers an opportunity to further develop a range of set-ups that can be shared with customers in the early months of the car's competitive life".

McErlean, part of Hyundai's junior driver project, helped to cover more than 310 miles of asphalt running.

Hyundai Motorsport Customer Racing manager Andrew Johns said: "The data we have gained from the three days in Italy will be shared with our customers."

Spanish driver Nil Solans will contest Rally Islas Canarias from November 18-20 in a i20 N Rally2 under the Team MRF Tyres banner, Craig Breen's former ERC entrant.

SUNINEN GRABS A LIFELINE WITH HYUNDAI OUTING

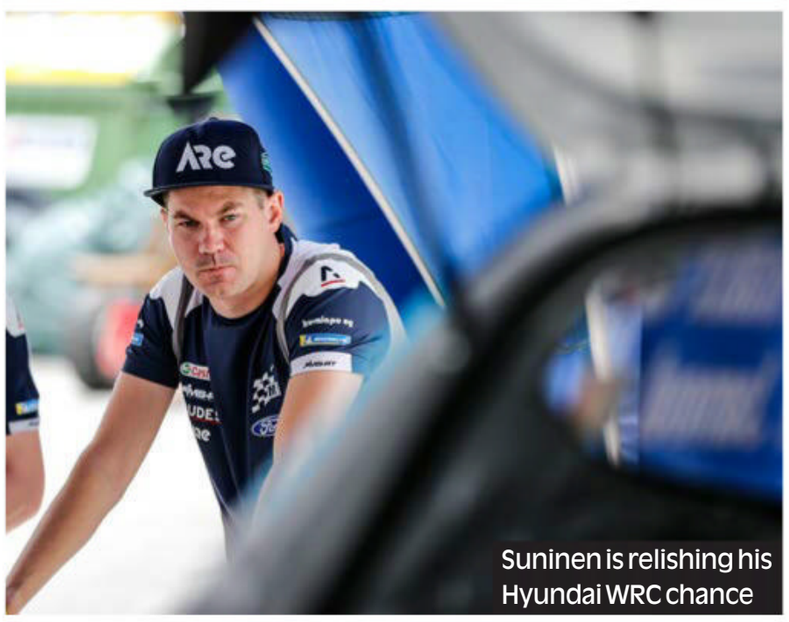
Teemu Suninen has described his call-up as Ott Tanak's replacement on Rally Monza as a "great opportunity".

Suninen will take over Tanak's Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC for the World championship finale next week after Tanak withdrew for personal reasons.

In a Facebook post, the Estonian wrote: "I'm gutted I'm not able to participate at Monza due to personal family matters. This is a tough decision to make, but it's a needed one."

Suninen, whose last outing in a World Rally Car was in an M-Sport Ford Fiesta on Rally Estonia in mid-July, finished second in WRC2 on Rally Spain, his Hyundai debut.

"This is a great opportunity," Finn Suninen said. "It's a challenge to get to know a new car, but we'll definitely accept the challenge. A wonderful way to end the season." Mikko Markkula will co-drive Suninen in Monza. Thierry Neuville and Dani Sordo complete the factory line-up.



Suninen is relishing his Hyundai WRC chance

Solberg Jr will handle the WRC Hyundai in MOnza

SOLBERG SOLID WITH CO-DRIVER BRITON DREW

Oliver Solberg will continue his partnership with Craig Drew when he makes his latest appearance in a semi-works Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC in the World championship on Rally Monza.

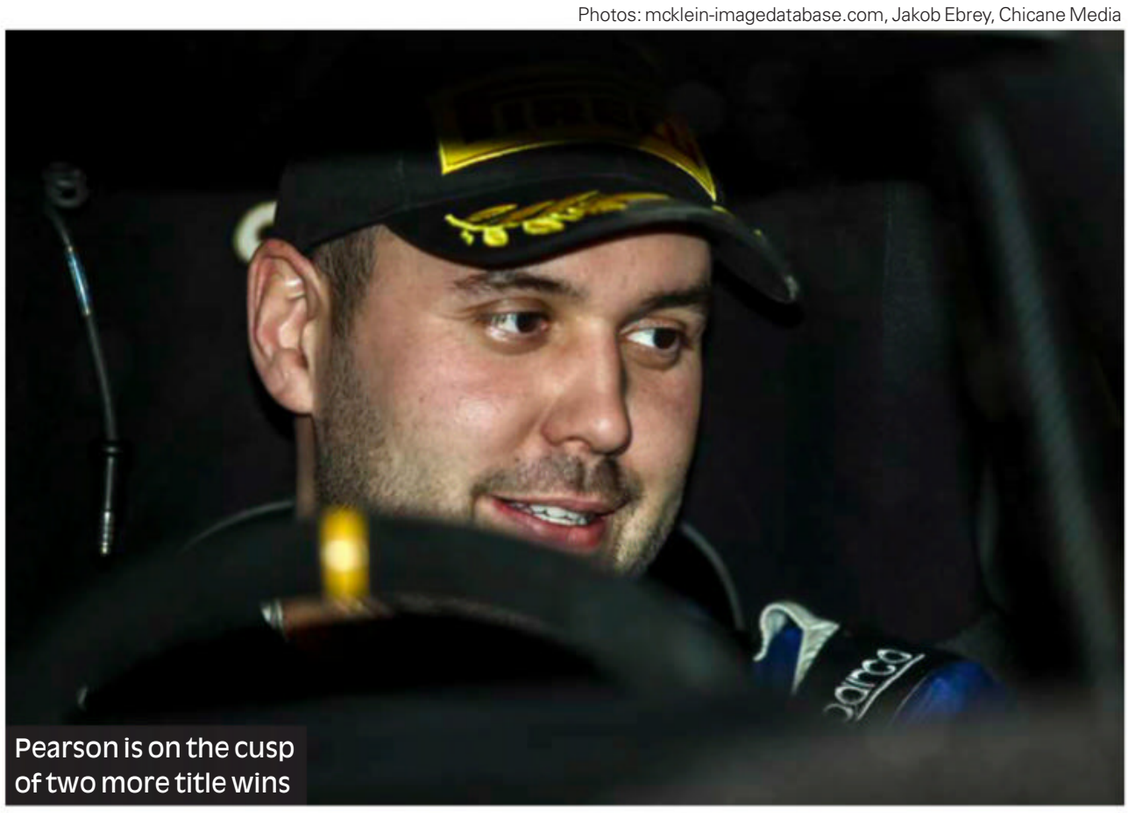
Solberg, 20, and Drew finished seventh in the 2C Competition entry on Rally Spain last month and will get another chance to share the car on Italy's WRC season finale.

"I have good memories from Monza after finishing seventh last year [in a Skoda Fabia Rally2 Evo]," he said. "The stages are tricky and can be dry, wet or snowy. We'll go ready and learn as much as we can."

PEARSON WELL PLACED TO DOUBLE 2021 TITLE HAUL

Skoda man could go nuts on the classic Welsh stages for glory

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com, Jakob Ebrey, Chicane Media



Pearson is on the cusp of two more title wins

By Luke Barry

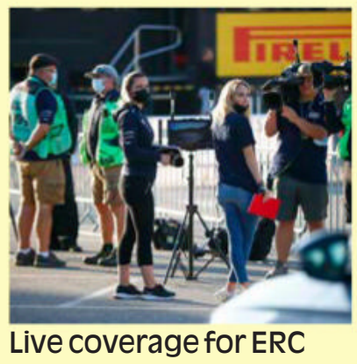
Garry Pearson has the opportunity to add both the BTRDA Gold Star and Welsh Rally Championship trophies to his 2021 cabinet on this weekend's Rallynuts Stages.

Pearson has already secured the Scottish and British Rally Championship National titles this year in a Skoda Fabia R5 and leads both the BTRDA and the Welsh points ahead of this weekend's finale.

Callum Black's Ford Fiesta R5 is Pearson's chief rival, but his only realistic shot at claiming the spoils is to win the rally. If Black wins, Pearson can afford to finish as low as fourth to win the BTRDA but would need to be second to secure the Welsh crown as well.

"I'm confident I can win the rally, not very confident that Garry will finish lower than fourth," Black told MN. "I know what Garry's like… he's been flying all year, he has been quicker than us over the duration of the year so if he wins it then the best man won."

Black will be joined in the car by Tom Woodburn as usual navigator Jack Morton leaves for Rally Monza (alongside Frank Bird) on the day of the Rallynuts. Woodburn is free as George Lepley won't start the event in his Mitsubishi Lancer E10. Elliot Payne is still in BTRDA contention, starting his second rally in a Ford Fiesta Rally2. Ian Bainbridge also returns to action after missing the Cambrian due to work commitments, while several drivers – including BRC title contender Osian Pryce – have entered the historic class in preparation for the Roger Albert Clark Rally later this month.



Live coverage for ERC

EXPANDED COVERAGE AND PROGRAMME FOR EURO BATTLE IN 2022

The European Rally Championship will get a ninth round and a version of WRC All Live next season.

Bosses from WRC Promoter, which is taking over as the championship's promotional arm from Eurosport Events, outlined initial plans during an online gathering of teams, suppliers and media.

As well as confirming the strong likelihood of Ypres returning to the ERC roster for the first time since 2016, WRC Promoter's Peter Thul revealed that work was ongoing to establish an ERC All Live service with a return to selected live stages being sold to international broadcasters.

Thul also confirmed a Powerstage format was being considered to replace the leg bonus points system that's currently used by all FIA regional rally championships, including the ERC. However, Thul stressed any changes to the sporting rules would need FIA Rally Commission approval before a proposal was submitted to December's World Motor Sport Council for ratification.

BORDER COUNTIES RETURNS AS BTRDA SCHEDULE REVEALED

The Border Counties Rally will be part of the BTRDA Rally Series for the first time in 30 years as it joins the championship for the 2022 season.

The Jedburgh-based event hasn't run since 2019 and there were fears for the event's future after it was dropped from the Scottish Rally Championship calendar, but clerk of the course Clayton Lackenby told MN the "intention was always to carry on".

The rally will run in May rather than its traditional March date but retains its 45 competitive miles in Craik, the Tweed Valley and Wauchope forests.

"The event was part of the BTRDA throughout the '80s and early '90s and to go back to them, the whole committee is really excited to be part of that championship again," Lackenby said.

Berwick & District Motor Club will be partnering Hawick & Border to run the event, but it's unlikely to be part of the SRC as well as BTRDA, although the organisers remain open to the opportunity. The rest of the 2022 BTRDA calendar is similar to the intended 2021 schedule. The Border Counties has replaced the Plains in May while each event is separated by at least three weeks.

There will be eight rounds ahead of the BTRDA for the 2022 season

CALENDAR

2022 BTRDA

DATE	EVENT/LOCATION
Mar 12	Malcolm Wilson Rally Cockermouth
Apr 9	Rallynuts Stages Royal Welsh Showground
May 14	Border Counties Rally Jedburgh
Jun 18	Kielder Stages Hexham
Jul 9	Nicky Grist Stages Builth Wells
Sept 3	Woodpecker Stages TBA
Sept 24	Trackrod Forest Stages Filey
Oct 29	Cambrian Rally Llandudno

Edwards secured Welsh stages

RALLY4WALES'S MD EDWARDS STEPS DOWN

Jamie Edwards has left his role as managing director of Rally4Wales – the initiative that has helped Welsh rallying survive and build towards a future.

Along with Dave Evison, Richard Ceen and Gwyn Reynolds-Jones, Edwards has been a key part of R4W since it launched in 2016 but has left his post with new business commitments to focus on.

"It's very mixed emotions for me to reach the end of this particular stage," said Edwards. "I'm incredibly proud of what the R4W team have achieved since its inception. I never thought for one minute when I tried to get the campaign going it would end up the way it did!

"It's been a fascinating journey of success mixed with frustration at times, but I hope my work has made a positive difference to the sport for everyone. I have some new challenges to work on in my professional life so it's time for me to bow out and let the R4W team continue to safeguard rallying in Wales."

ROSKELL ECSTATIC TO BE A WINNER IN SUCH LITTLE TIME

Neil Roskell is "over the moon" that he's managed to win a rally so early in his career following his debut success on the recent Tour of Epynt event.

Roskell began rallying just two years ago with a Subaru Impreza but switched to a Ford Fiesta R5 earlier this season, finishing third in the Asphalt Championship. He won on Epynt despite only meeting co-driver Mark Crisp on the morning of the rally.

"I just feel so over the moon that I've managed to get a win so early," Roskell told MN. "I've got eighth, seventh, fourth, first and the car's at one with me now."

Roskell's win was special too. His son was recovering in a Covid ward in Blackpool and Roskell competed with his blessing. "I just wanted to do something for him," said Roskell. "I got told off by the Mrs after the second stage, because we did a fantastic first stage and went back out and didn't do as good... My wife said 'you need to do this for Nathan, get your finger out.'"

Advertising enquiries: 01732 446757

RALLY NEWS

SCOTTISH TARMACK RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP: KINGDOM STAGES RALLY — NOVEMBER 6

INGLIS FAMILY DOUBLE UP ON KINGDOM STAGES

Alistair and Colin Inglis claimed penultimate Scottish Tarmack event with next generation winning their class

Photos: John Fife, Motorsport Images, McLaren, World RX

Inglis brothers teed up a potential title win at Crail

By John Fife

Alistair and Colin Inglis took victory on last weekend's Kingdom Stages Rally at Crail. The win puts the brothers a step closer to the 2021 Scottish Tarmack Championship with one round remaining.

Initially, Andrew Kirkaldy and Peter Carstairs led after the first three stages in their Ford Fiestas R5 Mk2 but a dramatic fightback by the Inglis brothers meant they snatched back nine seconds on SS4 and a further three on the final stage to win.

Barry Groundwater and Michael Hendry finished third, but almost threw it away on the final stage with a lurid spin which wiped the nose off their Subaru Impreza WRC following a heavy rain shower.

Keeping it in the family, Greg Inglis (son of Alistair) and co-driver Ian Parker took fourth in their Lotus Exige, winning Class 4. Archie Swinscoe claimed the Junior win.

RESULTS

POS	DRIVER/CO-DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Alistair Inglis/Colin Inglis	Ford Fiesta R5	52m 51s
2	Andrew Kirkaldy/Peter Carstairs	Ford Fiesta R5 Mk2	+9s
3	Barry Groundwater/Michael Hendry	Subaru Impreza WRC	+1m58s
4	Greg Inglis/Ian Parker	Lotus Exige	+3m00s
5	Ian Paterson/Allan Paterson	Subaru Impreza	+3m28s
6	Sandy Fairbairn/Ian Murray	Mitsubishi Lancer E7	+3m45s
7	Peter Gibson/Chris Dodds	Mitsubishi Lancer E6	+4m10s
8	Alan Wallace/Darren Robertson	Mitsubishi Lancer E6	+4m19s
9	Des Campbell/Craig Forsyth	Peugeot 206	+4m19s
10	Drew Gallagher/David Crosbie	Skoda Fabia	+4m35s

Class winners: 1 Innes Mochrie/Kirsty Mochrie (Rover Metro GTI); 2 Campbell/Forsyth; 3 Brian Watson/Sean Donnelly (Ford Escort); 4 Inglis/Parker; 5 Inglis/Inglis; Junior Archie Swinscoe/Barry Young (Skoda Citigo)

ROAD RALLY ROUND-UP

Huge variety on the Targa tests

Once again Owen Turner/Rachel Vestey took victory on the Exmoor Targa, their fourth straight win in a row on the Somerset-based event. They faced a stiff challenge from Ethan Davies/Dafydd Evans. Davies was fastest on the two opening tests, then just held on to his lead after picking up a puncture on Test 3.

Things changed on Tests 4 and 5. Turner moved to the front as Davies picked up a cone fault on each of the two tests and maintained his pace to retain a narrow lead to the Finish.

Appropriately Andy Davies/Max Freeman, who'd won the KLMC Targa in May, took first place on the KLMC Targa Part Two. They emerged from the tight battle with Louis Baines/Gary Evans to win by 45 seconds.

The Clubman competitors Dewi Jones/Ceri Hicks beat the bogey on 10 of the Trac Mon Targa's 16 tests to take a clear victory. Steve Retchless/Sasha Heriot finished second, and won the Inter Club Rally, to secure some useful BTRDA Championship points, although only three series contenders made the trip to Anglesey.

Ian Mills

Exmoor Targa
Organiser: Tavern MC, Burnham-on-Sea MC & Minehead MC **When:** October 23 **Where:** Somerset
Championships: ASWMC & CSMG Tests: 10 (42 test miles)
Starters: 54.
1 Owen Turner/Rachel Vestey (MG ZR) 80m39s; 2 Ethan Davies/Dafydd Evans (Ford Puma) +18s; 3 Lucas Redwood/Zak Linham (Ford Sierra); 4 Chris Woolley/Jamie Woolley (BMW E30); 5 Elliott Sharp/Michael Spicer (MG ZR); 6 Andrew Lees/Grace Lees (Vauxhall Nova); 7 Jason Stone/Daniel Stone (BMW Compact); 8 Ben Smith/Simon Harris (Peugeot 106); 9 John Taylor/Nick Taylor (MG ZR); 10 Mike Raymond/Jamie Raymond (Ford Escort).
Class winners: Semi-Experts: Sharp/Spicer; Novices: Mark Aldred/Matthew Torok (MG ZR); Clubman Rally: Gary White/Bradley White (BMW 318Ti).

KLMC Targa Part Two
Organiser: Kirkby Lonsdale MC **When:** October 23 **Where:** Warcop Ranges
Championships: NESCRO
Tests: 12 (25 test miles and 15 miles) **Starters:** 55.
1 Andy Davies/Max Freeman (Subaru Impreza) 47m31s; 2 Louis Baines/Gary Evans (Peugeot 106 Rallye) +45s; 3 Tom Wilcox/Paul Allen (Toyota Starlet); 4 John Haygarth/Bob Hargreaves (Opel Kadett); 5 Chris Dodds/Lynsey Procter (Proton Satria); 6 Matt Warren/Iain Tullie (Ford Escort); 7 Danny Cowell/Phil Boyle (Impreza); 8 Christian Parker/Dave Edwards (Impreza); 9 Clint Eade/Tom Murphy (BMW 318Ti); 10 Tom Hicks/Sam Spencer (Citroen Saxo VTS).
Class winners: Historics: Haygarth/Hargreaves; Experts: Dodds/Procter; Novices: Ryan Robinson/Martin Quilliam (Peugeot 106)

Trac Mon Targa
Organiser: Caernarvonshire & Anglesey MC **When:** October 23 **Where:** Anglesey Circuit
Championships: BTRDA & ANWCC Tests: 16 (25 test miles)
Starters: 58.
1 Dewi Jones/Ceri Hicks (Mazda MX-5) 48m32s; 2 Steve Retchless/Sasha Heriot (Ford Escort) +1m33s; 3 Iwan Jones/Gwynedd Jones (Ford Ka); 4 Brynli Thomas/Caian Williams (Subaru Impreza); 5 Carey Lindley/Tomos Parkes (Ford Fiesta); 6 Tom Thomas/Andrew Campbell (Fiesta); 7 Tom Evans/Justin Campbell (Escort); 8 Richard Jones/David Hillidge (Nissan Micra); 9 Carwyn Owen/Lowri Owen (Peugeot 106 Rallye); 10 Tom Williams/Iwan Thomas (Escort).
Class winners: Experts: Retchless/Heriot; Semi-Experts: Jones/Hillidge

NASCAR CHAMP KYLE BUSCH TO RUN IN NITRO RX

NASCAR Cup double champion Kyle 'Rowdy' Busch will make his Nitro Rallycross Championship debut this weekend at the Wild Horse Pass Motorsports Park.

After finishing ninth in the 2021 NASCAR standings at the series' Phoenix finale last Sunday, Busch will remain in the city in order to drive a Subaru Motorsports USA-run WRX STI in the third round of the season.

"Anybody that knows me knows that I'm a true racer and I've always prided myself in the ability to get behind the wheel of any type of vehicle at any type of track and be competitive," said the oft-outspoken Toyota stock car ace.

"I'm appreciative of the invite to be a part of it and I'm excited to see how I stack up against the competition."

'Rowdy' Busch brings his enormous fanbase to Nitro

Gilmour to don the papaya for 2022

EMMA GILMOUR JOINS McLAREN XE TEAM

McLaren Racing has signed experienced New Zealand rally driver Emma Gilmour to partner American Tanner Foust for its 2022 Extreme E effort.

McLaren revealed its female driver and Odyssey 21 livery during the COP26 UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow last week, with the launch attended by the Prince of Wales. Gilmour is no stranger to Extreme E, having driven for the Veloce Racing squad in events this season, standing in for the permanent Veloce driver Jamie Chadwick, who had clashing W Series commitments.

"I'm incredibly honoured to be McLaren Racing's first female driver," said Gilmour.

"Growing up in New Zealand, Bruce McLaren and McLaren Racing are seen as the pinnacles of motorsport."

BELEVSKIY WORLD RX DEBUT

Newly crowned European Rallycross RX3 Champion Yury Belevskiy will make his World Rallycross Championship debut in Germany later this month.

Driving an EKS-built Audi S1 at the Nurburgring, he will the entry for the World RX season's double-header finale.

"I'm really looking forward to racing in the World Championship for the first time," said Belevskiy. "It'll be crazy and a little bit daunting to go up against drivers like Johan Kristoffersson and Timmy Hansen and I'm under no illusions that I'm facing a steep learning curve. At least with the track being new to the calendar this year, everyone will be starting off on a level playing field to a certain extent, but still the goal is to continue gaining experience," he added.

RX3 champ Belevskiy will take the helm of an EKS Audi S1 to take his World RX bow

HISTORICS

DOWN THE PUB

NEIL WOOD

Ford Anglia racer
Age: 60
Lives: Witham, Essex

Wood has battled the stars...

Racing is in the family
"Basically, my father Barry started racing in 1961. He raced an Anglia at Snetterton when I was due, 60 years ago. He designed the Shapecraft Elans and he's still with us and he's 86 years old. He raced Modsports Midgets and Ginettas until he had a career-ending accident at Castle Combe when he hit a marshals' post. In the 1980s he bought Mike Crabtree's Lotus Cortina Mk1. As a toddler I'd been going racing with dad. In fact, he even raced a Formula 3 car at one point at Monaco."

That led to historic touring cars
"He bought the Cortinas so I bought this Anglia in 1989 off the guy who built it on a shoestring. His name is Jeff Pollitt, who I was reintroduced to at Oulton Park last year. He actually had a tear in his eye when he saw the car and how it is now. It was reshelled in 2009 because with the other shell every time I hit a kerb it split somewhere and we were welding it up. But I've been racing this car since 1989."

He went in at the deep end
"In my first race Snetterton in October 1989 the front row consisted of George Polley, Gerry Marshall in the blue Anglia owned by Steve Warrior and Bob Sherring in his Galaxie. I had a slipping clutch and was on the back row for my very first race but within two laps I think I was running 10th until the propshaft snapped just behind me and that could have been very, very painful."

The money ran out
"We did half the 1990 season up against Rod Birley who is a fair driver and he was beating me. But we were getting closer and then I ran out of money as the recession started. A few years later we started a family."

He went rallying
"I did a bit of rallying when the garage we were working at started a Daihatsu franchise and did three years in the Avanzato. They did fall over but we had a lot of fun with it. We got the Anglia back out in 2000. We did good seasons in 2008 and in 2009 but we decided that we needed a bit more grunt because Dan Cox was beating us in his Cortina. I think finally now we've got the car we want."

Photos: Paul Lawrence

Tordoff's Falcon will be reworked by JRT

TORDOFF TEAMS UP WITH THE JORDAN RACING TEAM

Former BTCC title runner-up joins forces with the 2013 title winner

By Paul Lawrence

Former British Touring Car Championship racer Sam Tordoff has joined forces with Jordan Racing Team for his historic racing programme in 2022.

Tordoff has placed several historic cars with the team headed by former BTCC rival Andrew Jordan, including his Ford Falcon. This winter, the Falcon will be rebuilt by the Jordan squad ahead of a full Masters Historic Touring Car campaign next season.

Tordoff says that running at the front of the Masters Pre '66 Touring Car Championship is a prime ambition for 2022.

The Yorkshireman made his debut with the team at Silverstone recently when he joined Michael Cullen and Paddy Shovlin to help take the Irishmen's JRT-tended Daytona Cobra Coupe to third overall in the three-hour Pall Mall Cup race.

"This is the first time I've raced the Cobra and I only drove it for the first time on Friday," said Tordoff at Silverstone. "It's not as intimidating as you think. I've driven a lot of big American V8s over recent years and it's got the same engine as the Falcon so I was more comfortable coming into it.

"JRT is looking after a couple of my cars now so that's where the relationship started and already I'm being given opportunities like this so I'm super grateful and we'll see where it takes us."

Since stepping back from the BTCC Tordoff, who works in the family business created by his late grandfather Jack, has increasingly focused on historic racing.

Former European Championship BMW is a new toy for Judge

Judge switches to classic BMW 635 racer

Former Caterham and Citroen C1 racer Tristan Judge made his historic racing debut in the Historic Touring Car Challenge race at Silverstone.

Judge bought a period Group A BMW 635 in a Bonhams auction and raced the car to a class-winning seventh overall in the hour-long race. "I was lucky to be in the right place that right time I think," he said of the purchase.

The BMW ran in the European Touring Car Championship in period for a privateer Swiss team before spending some time on the hills.

"It's a proper Group A car, I gather, but I think it was at the back of the grid. It's not run for two or three years," added Judge.

Stars Breen and Nagle to tackle Killarney Historic in BMW M3

World Rally Championship contenders Crag Breen and Paul Nagle will contest the Killarney Historic Rally on November 27 in a BMW M3.

Breen and Nagle will tackle the event in an E30-model M3 from Mats van den Brand. The rally will feature a double run over the classic Killarney stages of Moll's Gap, Beallaghbeama and Caragh Lake.

Killarney-based Nagle is eager to win his home event and earn the famous silver trophy that honours his late father Maurice, who was the brainchild behind the event.

Clerk Martin Farrell said that they had received a record 60 entries in the historic category. "We are allowed to start 140 crews, and the uptake in the historics means that there will be a lot of modified entrants disappointed as we cannot accommodate everybody."

Nagle (left) and Breen will aim for Killarney glory

HSCC hits a carbon zero target for 2021

The Historic Sports Car Club bosses have offset the carbon produced during its 2021 racing season as the next step of the club's drive to play its part in the battle against global warming.

The offset was calculated to cover the club's entire racing season as well as the travel undertaken by club officials during the season.

Andy Dee-Crowne of the HSCC said: "This is one part of our plan to play an active role in the battle against climate change. The next phase will include the evaluation of the possible use of electric power supplies and synthetic fuel to reduce reliance on fossil fuel. We will work closely with Motorsport UK to make our racing as sustainable as possible."

STREET'S AHEAD IN HISTORIC RALLYING

Following the penultimate event of the season, the Cambrian Rally, the BTRDA Historic Cup has been won by the Ford Escort Mk2 of Paul Street and Ian Jones. They will miss Saturday's final round, the Rallynuts Stages, while the car is re-prepared for the Roger Albert Clark Rally. They cannot now be caught by the Hillman Avenger of Barry Jordan and Arwel Jenkins.

IN BRIEF

Chris Smith
MN was sad to learn of the death of Chris Smith, founder of the Westfield marque, at the age of 77. As well as starting the Westfield range of sportscars in 1982 from his home in Lichfield, he was a regular competitor in a wide range of cars and in later years competed in races and speed events in a Lotus 21 Grand Prix car.

HSCC winners
The major winners in the Historic Sports Car Club Historic Formula 2 Series have been confirmed and it is Matt Wrigley (March 782) who has taken the Bruno Giacomelli Trophy class for two-litre F2 cars by a single point. From 10 races at five events, top overall scorer was Nick Pancisi (March 712) who claimed the Jochen Rindt Trophy for the 1600cc Formula 2 cars.

Silver Fern is go
The dates for the next edition of the New Zealand Silver Fern Rally have been confirmed. After missing 2020 due to Covid, the marathon gravel rally will return on November 20-26 in 2022 and will start and finish in Christchurch on the South Island. The event is popular with UK and European crews. Details about the route will be announced in December.

Evett's landmark
Rob Evett, who celebrated his 70th birthday last month, will mark 50 years of rallying by contesting the Roger Albert Clark Rally later this month. Buckinghamshire-based Evett will be co-driven by his son Michael in their 1300cc Vauxhall Nova. In October 1971 Evett tackled his first rally in a Riley 1.5 and has competed most years since then.

Rallynuts prep
A clutch of quick historic crews are planning to use Saturday's Rallynuts Stages as a final shakedown ahead of the Roger Albert Clark Rally, which starts 12 days later. Osian Pryce, Jason Pritchard, Harry Hunt, Ben Friend and Simon Webster are all on the entry list for the event that centres on the classic Myherin and Hafren stages in mid-Wales.

Exeter excitement
Entries have opened for the 92nd Exeter Trial, which will be run by the Motor Cycling Club on Saturday January 8. The classic reliability trial will start from the Haynes Motor Museum in Sparkford, Somerset, at midnight and run through until Saturday afternoon taking in famous Devon trials hills like Simms and Slippery Sam before finishing at Kingsteignton.

Advertising enquiries: 01732 446757

MN CIRCUIT RALLY REPORT

IN BRIEF

Bird in Monza

Frank Bird and Jack Morton will get their first taste of WRC2 action later this month when they take part in Rally Monza between November 18-21, racing in the same Ford Fiesta they claimed their Neil Howard Stages success with. "I can't wait, it'll be an amazing event" said Bird, who will miss the clashing second MNCRC event that is set to take place at Cadwell Park. "It's been a good shakedown for the event to keep us sharp."

Car swap for English

MN Circuit Rally Championship stalwart Mike English was one of several drivers making the switch from an older Ford Escort Mk2 to the modern Ford Fiesta R5 for the coming season. "It's a very different piece of kit, so we're just getting a feel for the car at the moment still", said English, who finished 11th overall in the Cheshire event, sporting L plates ironically for the car's debut. "It's baby steps."

Davey's cruel luck

Joshua and Tamsyn Davey returned with their Darrian hoping for a change in fortune after two seasons plagued by mechanical gremlins. Staying loyal to the chassis they had previously taken stage wins with, the pair's rally ended early after soaring oil temperatures on the first stage. The pair are hopeful of a return for Cadwell Park, a crank seal leak causing team-mate Michael Windsor's retirement.

Cox quick in a C2

Rob Cox was another driver switching machinery for his return to the championship as a full-season entry. The former Ford Escort Mk2 driver – sharing the car with Ethan Zdrodowski – brought with him a Honda-powered Citroen C2 for a fresh title assault, and finished an impressive second out of the 17 finishers in Class C on the car's debut despite flat shift issues affecting third and fourth gears.

Carannate's Porsche

Noticeably missing in action from the Neil Howard Stages was the popular Porsche Cayman of series regular Ciro Carannante, set to return with a lighter Cayman in December. He instead played co-driver for his regular navigator Simon Coates in a Paul Sheard-prepared Mazda MX-5, which retired after clutch problems. "The clutch destroyed itself, but Sheard's lot got a new one living so close so we got our money's worth! It's been good fun."

One-off for Cunningham

After impressing in his first handful of rallies behind the wheel of a Ford Fiesta, Joe Cunningham says that budget constraints may limit him to sporadic Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship events this season. "Budget is really what is restricting us from putting in a full season entry at the moment", he said, taking a third overall podium alongside a Phoenix Stages victory earlier this year. "I'm hoping to do Rally Barbados if possible."

Bird and Morton exorcised the ghost of 2020 exclusion

BIRD FINALLY LANDS OULTON WIN

After knocking hard on the door so many times, up-and-comer Frank Bird took the Neil Howard Stage victory in MN Circuit clash. By Dan Mason

Morton (l) and Bird enjoyed the celebrations after a dominant win

Joe Cunningham beat his uncle Kevin Procter from the outset

Frank Bird finally ticked off a Neil Howard Stages victory to create history on the opening round of the new MN Circuit Rally Championship season at Oulton Park.

It was the event that co-driver Jack Morton targeted success in for his self-proclaimed 'boy wonder' – one that kept eluding the ever-improving pair over recent years after a sequence of misfortunes.

Finally, that duck was broken in style with eight stage wins from the eight contested, with Bird and Morton earning an additional coup of becoming the first pairing to have won at each of the national circuits to hold a rallying event.

After competing with the proven stars of the British Rally Championship in the previous Neil Howard Stages back in May, the latest setback of a controversial technical exclusion lit the fire in Bird Jr to finally get the job done in Cheshire at the third attempt of the GT World Challenge racer's still-young rally career.

The pair set off with intent in the morning's first two seven-mile stages, and a six-second advantage soon became 17 for the Ford Fiesta Rally 2 duo. "We caught a slower car in the first stage at the gravel section so backed out to avoid being sprayed, but it feels good," was the rally leader's early verdict, with a train of Fiestas lining up to give chase.

Leading that charge would be Ford convert Joe Cunningham, getting the better of uncle Kevin Procter in the early stages to make the latter's quest for a fourth win a more difficult task at hand.

Procter's challenge would meet an ignominious end on SS3 after a miscalculation at the final bend entering the circuit's traditional pitlane meant a snap decision had to be made to continue for an additional lap. His choice to flick-spin and three-point turn his way back to the flying finish would come back to haunt the experienced hand, excluded for briefly heading the wrong way in his recovery.

"We just missed the split," he bemoaned, as the same stage also eliminated the current champion Mark Kelly. After hitting a chicane barrel, an encounter with a gate post ensured that Kelly would not repeat his May triumph after picking up terminal suspension damage for his Ford Escort Mk2.

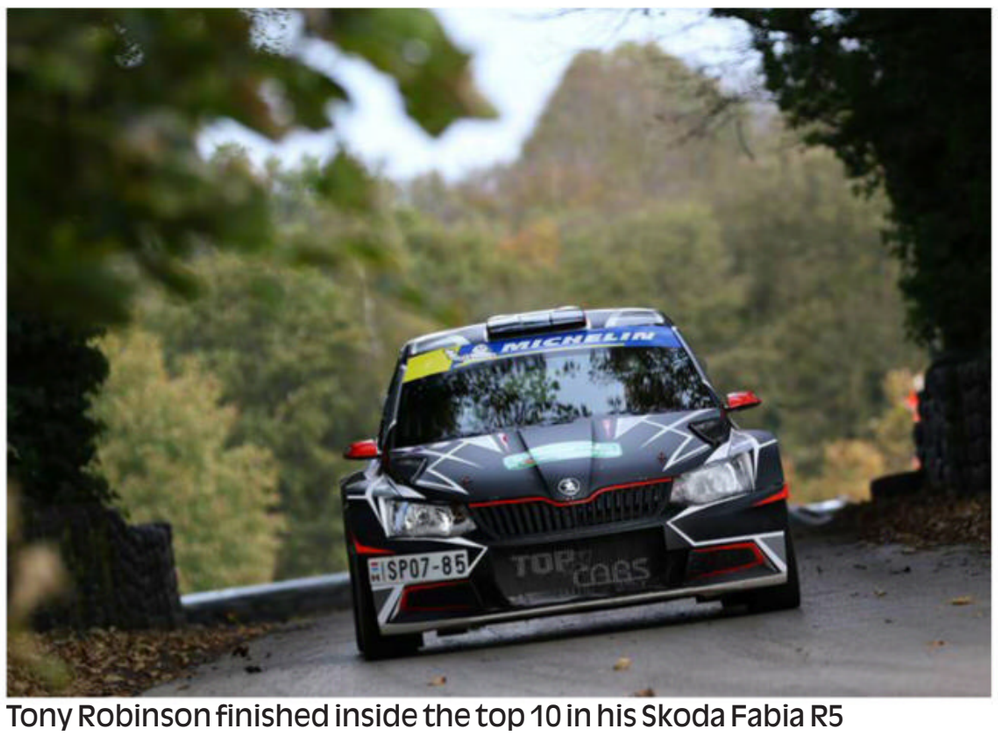
Twenty-nine seconds adrift at the halfway stage, Cunningham and the fellow Fiesta of Neil Roskell – enjoying his best rally to date – looked unable to dent the lead of the flying Bird up front, but a sudden brace of downpours in the afternoon's fifth and sixth stages gave the chasers new hope as tyre choice was becoming critical.

For Roskell, it already had. "I picked the wrong compound early on," he said, but still aiming at his prey. "I chose soft rather than medium, and saw they were going nine seconds quicker while we were two seconds quicker. I'm aiming for second, but I love the rain."

With some opting for a full wet set-up and others mixing their rubber to

Photos: SMJ Photography

Morris was the interloper among the Fiestas



Tony Robinson finished inside the top 10 in his Skoda Fabia R5

CLASSES

NEWTONS ROCK THE BOAT ONCE MORE IN THE 1400 CLASS

Class winners Christopher and Anthony Newton, who made the long trip to Oulton worthwhile

The absolute star performers in the classes were twins Christopher and Anthony Newton who drove the doors off their 1400cc Vauxhall Nova to win Class A and bag 16th overall as they humbled many more powerful cars.

The Newtons made the long haul from East Sussex worthwhile on their first competitive outing for nearly six months and took control of the class from the opening stage when they went half a minute quicker than any of their class rivals. Their prodigious speed through the chicanes matched the very fastest cars and they simply extended their lead stage by stage to end the day more than two minutes clear of the Opel Corsa of Nicky Cowperthwaite and James Wood.

It was much closer in the 1600cc division where just four seconds decided the class after a tremendous day-long battle between the Ford Fiesta R2 of Alex Cannon and Alan Carfrae and the Peugeot 106 Maxi of Ben and Andrew Wilkinson. It was nip and tuck all day and the balance turned in Cannon's favour when he eight seconds faster on stage six. It was all square on SS7 when darkness fell and a mighty effort from Wilkinson on the final stage trimmed the final margin back to four seconds.

Josh Payton's superb handling of his Ford Escort Mk2 ensured a resounding Class C win for the Bristol driver and his co-driver Jamie Vaughan. Not only that, but also they netted a place in the overall top 10. They had almost four minutes in hand over the rest of the two-litre class.

Barry Morris and Marc Fowler dominated the over two-litre two-wheel-drive class in their Darrian T90 GTR on their way to fourth overall while Thomas Barlow and Robert De Belder topped the class for two-litre H-pattern gearbox cars in their Honda Civic Type R. Paul Gorge and Daniel Hurst headed the Mazda MX-5 division.

Paul Lawrence

compensate the on-and-off conditions, Bird survived his only lairy moment on SS5 as he reversed his way out of an overshoot near the water splash. With Morton's quick-thinking alongside him, he was still fastest with 44s in his pocket heading into the night stages.

A 12s swing helped in a crushing SS7 effort, allowing Bird to finally remove the Oulton Park monkey from his back and steal the opening win of the season by just over a minute from the impressive Cunningham, Bird's 11th rally triumph since 2019.

"It's only our second rally in the car and its second win, so I couldn't ask for much more really," said the rally winner after a clean sweep of the day. "A few tricky bits along the way, but we were making sure not to take too many risks when we put the wets on for the afternoon."

Roskell's wet-weather pace ensured third overall and his maiden Motorsport News CRC podium after a fine performance, giving him hope for more at Cadwell with Bird set to be an absentee.

"I'm not going to tempt fate for Cadwell, but let's say we'll try our best [to win]," he said, again touting tyres during the tricky afternoon phase. "For us, the biggest thing today was tyre choice, but when it started raining I loved the wet. It was about getting it right and seeing what others did, then when we looked at it we stuck the wets on and I got full control of the car and knew what to do with it."

Fourth went to returnee Barry Morris with stand-in co-driver Marc Fowler, the champion steadily rising to his final position with a consistent display in the Darrian GTR on his full-season comeback.

The Darrian was also the first car to stop the dominance of Rally 2 and R5 Fiesta machinery within the top 10, with the Blue Oval featuring in eight of the 10 places. He left behind him a thrilling battle for the final place in the top five, which looked to heading the way of another Neil Howard winner, Graham Coffey.

A four-second swing on SS6 went to the similar Fiesta of Darrell Taylor however, instantly shifting momentum in his favour as the wet weather made its presence felt. With a full second's advantage, his time was matched by Coffey on the penultimate run, leading to a tense conclusion, Taylor managing that pressure with a superb final stage to beat Coffey by four seconds at the flying finish.

Seventh was the experienced Nick Whale, christening a new Ford Fiesta of his own with a strong performance to beat the Skoda of Tony Robinson and the Ford Escort Mk2s of Welshman Wil Owen and runaway Class C winner Josh Payton, the latter hoping to profit from Bird's absences in the overall title fight.

A stage-one puncture hurt Rob Hughes' quest for what could well have been a possible podium on true pace, instead finishing 12th after a heroic 40-minute gearbox change by the CGS team was enough to get the car home.

RESULTS

MN Circuit Rally Championship
Round 1 When: November 6-7 Where: Oulton Park

POS	DRIVER/CO-DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Frank Bird/Jack Morton	Ford Fiesta R2	50m47s
2	Joe Cunningham/Josh Beer	Ford Fiesta	+1m06s
3	Neil Roskell/Shaun Layland	Ford Fiesta R5	+1m40s
4	Barry Morris/Marc Fowler	Darrian T90 GTR	+2m45s
5	Darrell Taylor/Dylan Thomas	Ford Fiesta R2	+3m08s
6	Graham Coffey/Matt Daniels	Ford Fiesta	+3m12s
7	Nick Whale/Sally Whale	Ford Fiesta	+3m29s
8	Tony Robinson/Paul Spooner	Skoda Fabia R5	+4m06s
9	Wil Owen/Chloe Louise Thomas	Ford Escort RS	+4m36s
10	Josh Payton/Jamie Vaughan	Ford Escort Mk2	+4m41s

Class winners: Bird/Morton; Morris/Fowler; Payton/Vaughan; Christopher Newton/Anthony Newton (Vauxhall Nova); Alex Cannon/Alan Carfae (Ford Fiesta R2); Greg Williams/Richard Edwards (Subaru Impreza); Thomas Barlow/Robert De Belder (Honda Civic Type R); Kimberly Stuart Mather/Yvonne Elizabeth Mather (Chrysler Sunbeam Lotus); Paul Gorge/Daniel Hurst (Mazda MX-5).

Neil Roskell splashed to a podium

Darrell Taylor produced a solid run for fifth place

Former event winner Graham Coffey was sixth

Advertising enquiries: 01732 446757

FEATURE

THE BTCC SUPPORTING CAST WITH THE BIG FUTURES

Stephen Lickorish looks at the stand-out performers from the TOCA support package

There is no time to rest at a British Touring Car Championship meeting. Aside from the headlining tin-tops, the support race undercard can often outstrip its bigger brother in terms of on-track action.

And, as usual, this season has thrown up a host of stars of the present and of the future. From Dan Cammish's tense win in the Porsche Carrera Cup GB to the continuing upward trend of Adam Smalley's career with Ginetta Supercup glory, there was intrigue throughout.

Mix in the four-abreast action of the Ginetta Junior division, a feat often mirrored by the Mini Challenge, and the thrills were endless. Matthew Rees marched to the British F4 championship too to mark himself out as a single-seater star of the future.

Here, we look back at a memorable season.

GINETTA JUNIOR

If there is one series with a reputation for unpredictability and chaotic races it is Ginetta Junior. And yet there was a feature of this season that was anything but unpredictable: Aston Millar finishing in the top six.

Aside from the very final race of the year – when R Racing boss Jamie Ross admits Millar "let his hair down a bit" – he ended all of the other 24 contests in the top six. For a series where consistency is so hard to find, that is nothing short of remarkable. Especially when it is a characteristic that has not always been associated with Millar.

"It was really surprising because that was where Aston struggled in his first season and we worked on that over the winter as much as we could in testing," continues Ross. "He's grown up a lot in himself from last year and he gained momentum at the right time of the season."

That momentum started at Knockhill, where Millar landed a breakthrough double victory and two second places, having previously "slipped under the radar" with his earlier top sixes. He then continued that form into the rest of the season, ending the year with seven wins and seven other podiums and sealing the crown with two races to spare. There were some memorable wins among those, including a 0.01-second triumph at Silverstone after a final-corner move and an incredible race-long battle with Liam McNeilly at Donington Park. And to cap it off, Millar was able to share his success with his father, who was his mechanic.

Millar was not alone in the impressive consistency department this year, however. Fox Motorsport's McNeilly was the only other to score in every race and, had he enjoyed a better opening event at Thruxton, could have put Millar under more pressure for the title. "I didn't really expect much from the season," admits McNeilly. "I thought it would be top 10s and top fives but we seemed to turn it around at Snetterton and really start to be frontrunners."

McNeilly went from qualifying 16th in Hampshire and taking a best result of 10th, to starting second in Norfolk and securing a win and two podiums. The confidence from that Snetterton weekend continued for the rest of the year but he ultimately was not quite able to match Millar.

Maturity reaped the rewards for Millar

While that pair grew stronger and stronger as the season wore on, early pacesetter Callum Voisin dropped back. He still finished the year with the joint most wins (seven, tied with Millar) but a 70-point penalty for a technical infringement and getting caught up in a few incidents meant he fell to sixth in the standings, having been unable to match the consistently strong performances of Millar.

STANDINGS

Porsche Carrera Cup GB

P	DRIVER	TEAM	PTS
1	Aston Millar	R Racing	653
2	Liam McNeilly	Fox Motorsport	608
3	Seb Hopkins	Elite Motorsport	516
4	Robert de Haan	Richardson Racing	484
5	Will Jenkins	Elite Motorsport	415
6	Callum Voisin	R Racing	363

BRITISH FORMULA 4

Rees overcame a slump at the season's midpoint

STANDINGS

British Formula 4

P	DRIVER	TEAM	PTS
1	Matthew Rees	JHR Developments	331
2	Matias Zagazeta	Argenti Motorsport	306
3	McKenzy Cresswell	JHR Developments	305
4	Joel Granfors	Fortec Motorsport	240
5	James Hedley	Carlin	226
6	Joseph Loake	JHR Developments	199

He may have become only the second car racing rookie to land the British Formula 4 crown, but Matthew Rees openly admits his title-winning season was far from perfect. It began in magnificent style as he claimed five of the opening six qualifying-based pole positions and converted two of those into wins, but then he struggled a little more.

"I think the main issue for us was the mid-season dip in between Oulton Park and Knockhill all the way through to Silverstone," he reflects. "I wouldn't say it was mediocre, but it wasn't enough for what we wanted."

During those five events, JHR Developments driver Rees managed five podiums – far from terrible but not necessarily the results you would expect from someone who began the season so impressively.

And Rees has a clear idea of why this was the case. Having headed into the year with the goal of winning the rookie championship and challenging for a top-five overall, suddenly his expectations had been raised following his strong start and he was "focusing too much on the championship".

It was understandable. Despite the drop in form, he grabbed the points lead at Knockhill as James Hedley had an even more stark reversal in fortunes. The Fortec racer was sensational at his local Thruxton circuit for the opener, taking two wins and a podium in changeable conditions to become the early pacesetter. But a disastrous Scottish weekend, where he scored a solitary point, led to a switch to Carlin – however this did nothing to halt the slump and he faded to anonymity.

Rees and Hedley's fall down the pecking order allowed second-year Argenti driver Matias Zagazeta a chance to shine. The Peruvian claimed seven top-two results at those five mid-season events to catapult himself into contention before Rees wrestled the advantage back with a double Donington Park triumph. And he duly cruised to the crown at the Brands finale with a pair of fifth places as Zagazeta spun away his chances in race one. He may not always have been winning races, but it was still an impressive season for Rees.

Photos: Jakob Ebrey

PORSCHE CARRERA CUP GB

Consistency was the watchword for Cammish

Prior to this season, all of Dan Cammish's title victories had followed a familiar pattern. In British Formula Ford in 2013 and his two previous Porsche Carrera Cup GB triumphs, he had won at the opening weekend and never looked back.

Cammish did indeed win the first race of this campaign, too, but the run of dominant victories did not follow for the Redline racer. Quite simply, the competition – chiefly Lorcan Hanafin – did not allow him to do that.

Hanafin headed into this season a little under the radar. The JTR driver had shown flashes of speed in his rookie campaign last year but was unable to take a win, while Harry King stole the headlines as he blitzed the opposition. Many therefore expected a thrilling fight between Cammish and King this year but, in reality, Hanafin was arguably the fastest of them all.

He showed that by qualifying on pole for the opener at Snetterton by four tenths of a second and would have claimed his maiden win had he not crept out of position at the start. Nonetheless, the improvement was plain to see. "The extra work I was putting in behind the scenes was paying off," says Hanafin. "With iZone, I was doing sim training between my online [school] lessons – I was jumping on the sim for an hour doing head-to-head racing or qualifying runs."

Hanafin's first win did indeed come at Brands Hatch, with further triumphs following at Oulton Park and Knockhill, but early-season race-two woes – a slow puncture, track-limits penalty and contact – hampered his charge, while striking a tyre stack at Croft also proved costly.

STANDINGS

Porsche Carrera Cup GB

P	DRIVER	TEAM	PTS
1	Dan Cammish	Redline Racing	123
2	Lorcan Hanafin	JTR	116
3	Kiern Jewiss	Team Parker Racing	104
4	Harry King	Team Parker Racing	94
5	Will Martin	Richardson Racing	86
6	Lewis Plato	Valluga Racing	59

All the while, Cammish continued to rack up the podiums – even when he admitted he was not at his best and was battling with a lack of straightline speed. And that consistency made the difference: 12 top-threes from 16 races allowed him to beat Hanafin by seven points in the final reckoning. It may have been a very different path to title glory but it still allowed Cammish to make history, becoming the category's first three-time champion.

MINI CHALLENGE

Of all the British Touring Car support series title deciders, there is no disputing which was the most tense. To have Mini Challenge rivals, and Excelr8 Motorsport team-mates, Dan Zelos and Max Bird separated by three points in a group of six – or, sometimes, more – cars squabbling throughout the Brands Hatch finale created a barnstorming finish in which you never quite knew what was going to happen.

Ultimately, Zelos took the crown with second place to Bird's fifth. But it is a race that will live long in the memory on its own merits: the best since the Minis joined the BTCC bill. "The positions were changing every single lap and I was trying to think 'it's just one race and do the best you can'," recalls Zelos.

"You didn't want to take too many risks when battling at 80% and that final lap was almost in slow motion. I've never worked so hard to get every apex right and it never felt so difficult!"

The finale aside, Zelos had been the driver to beat for much of the season. He did not have the best of starts at Snetterton but the subsequent Brands Hatch weekend culminated in Zelos's first series win for 21 months. Another strong event at Oulton Park was then followed bya double win at Knockhill, which Zelos describes as a key moment in his title win.

But a tough penultimate weekend at Donington Park, where a damper issue compromised his pace, meant Bird was well within range heading to the Kent showdown. Zelos's consistency won out and the fact he dropped 58 points – more than a win – at the end of the year demonstrated his superiority.

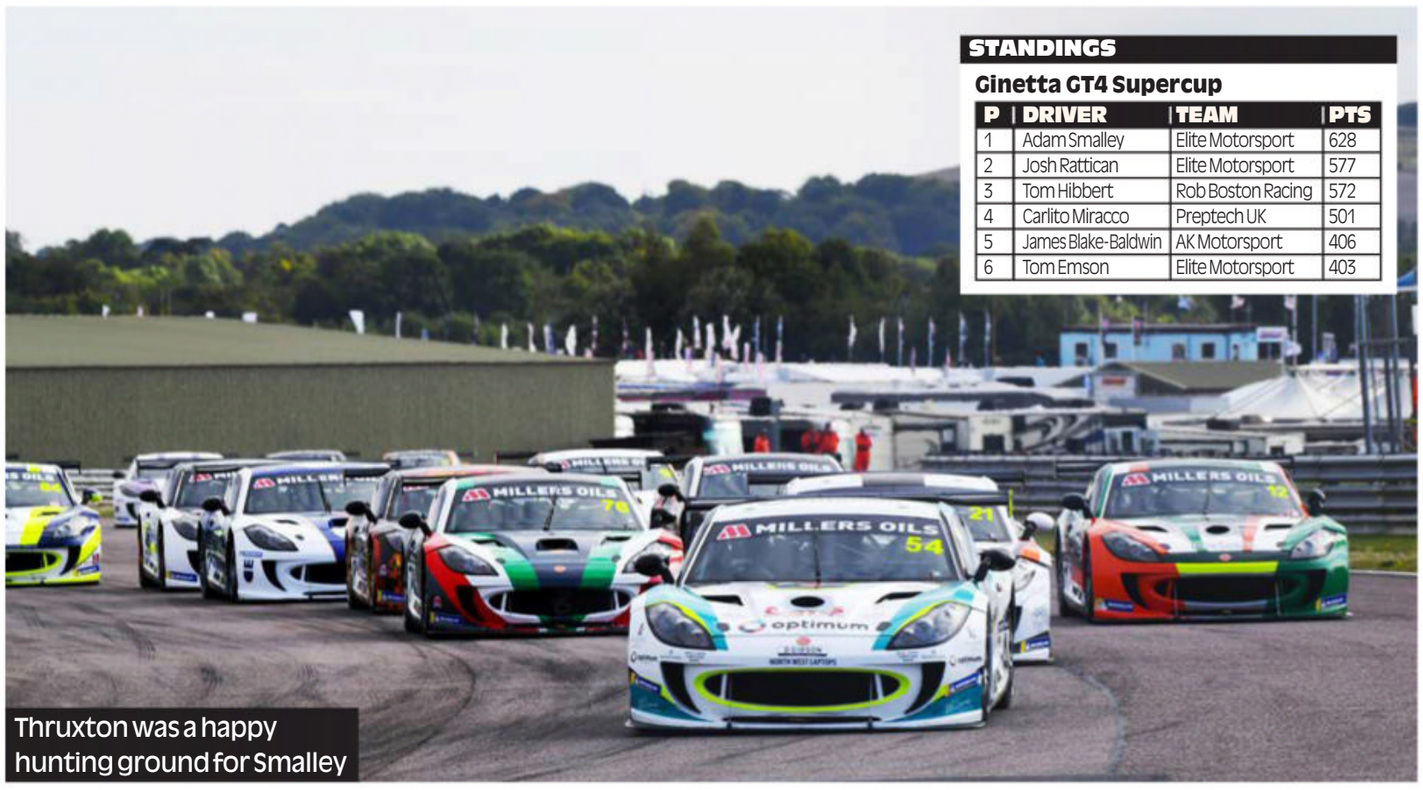
STANDINGS

Mini Challenge

P	DRIVER	TEAM	PTS
1	Dan Zelos	Excelr8 Motorsport	694
2	Max Bird	Excelr8 Motorsport	687
3	Lewis Brown	LDR Performance Tuning	624
4	Jack Davidson	Lux Motorsport	624
5	Max Coates	Graves Motorsport	610
6	Sam Weller	Hybrid Tune	607

Knockhill flourish was key to title for Zelos

GINETTA GT4 SUPERCUP



Thruxton was a happy hunting ground for Smalley

STANDINGS

Ginetta GT4 Supercup

P	DRIVER	TEAM	PTS
1	Adam Smalley	Elite Motorsport	628
2	Josh Rattican	Elite Motorsport	577
3	Tom Hibbert	Rob Boston Racing	572
4	Carlito Miracco	Preptech UK	501
5	James Blake-Baldwin	AK Motorsport	406
6	Tom Emson	Elite Motorsport	403

It is fair to say that Adam Smalley endured a roller coaster of emotions in his title-winning Ginetta GT4 Supercup campaign this year. Not least because, until a few weeks before the season started, he did not think he would be on the grid at all.

"To go from three weeks prior to the season not thinking I was going to race at all to getting on the grid and winning the championship, I can't believe it," he says. "Going into the season, I had basically admitted I wasn't racing at all to the team. I then got a deal with my sponsor Optimum Pay Group and that got me onto the grid.

"We scored the most points in the second half of 2020 and we had that momentum but, because it was such a difficult winter, there was no pressure. The pressure and the biggest challenge was to get on the grid."

There was certainly no sign of Smalley's off-season funding struggles come the delayed first round at Snetterton. He put his Elite Motorsport-run G55 on pole – by four tenths of a second – and stormed to a double win. But his perfect start to the campaign came crashing to a halt in race three when relatively minor contact with Rob Boston racer Tom Hibbert – who would become the other key contender for the crown – at Agostini left Smalley out. And that put him on the back foot in the title race. "We knew we had the pace, we knew we were going to be strong but we were playing catch-up afterwards," Smalley recalls.

He clawed back some ground at Brands Hatch before having a "nightmare" at Oulton Park. Two track-limits penalties stripped him of a hard-fought win in the opener, during which he battled with a broken door that refused to stay shut, and he was then mired in the midfield in race two, meaning he left Cheshire 36 points adrift of Hibbert.

However, double wins at Knockhill and Thruxton, followed by consistent podiums at Croft and Donington Park meant fifth and fourth places at the Brands finale were all Smalley needed to wrap up the crown with a race to spare and enjoy some very different emotions to the uncertainty of pre-season. ■

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THE VOICE OF BRITISH MOTORSPORT

MOTORSPORT NEWS

MOTORSPORT NEWS AWARDS 2021

in association with CATACLEAN

We take the wraps off our first raft of winners from the 2021 season

THE FIRST MOTORSPORT NEWS AWARDS SPECIAL

By Matt James

MN prides itself on being the voice from the heart of the UK motorsport landscape, and our first annual awards aim to cement that fact.

We have looked at all aspects of motorsport in this country. You, the readers, have helped us to pick out the National Rally Driver of the Year and the National Racing Driver of the Year, while our panel of experts has looked at the Historics Driver of the Year, Sporting Scene Drivers of the Year, Rising Star of the Year, Team of the Year, Organising Club of the Year, Event of the Year and Series of the Year.

We celebrate all the achievements of our winners and wish them all a highly successful 2022 season. If they manage to reach the heights again, you will see them nominated again in 12 months from now for the second MN Awards.

Full contents page 21

NATIONAL RACING

THE SQUAD IN IT FOR THE LONG HAUL

Team of the Year winner 2021 **P31**

HOT RODS

THE CHIEFS OF THE OVAL OFFICE

Organiser of the Year 2021 **P32**

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AWARDS SPECIAL

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The BTCC pack turned heads

British rallying remained strong

THE VERY FIRST MOTORSPORT NEWS AWARDS IS HERE – WE APPLAUD EACH WINNER

The secret is out, the debates have been concluded and the winners have been declared. The results of the very first Motorsport News awards are here – and they make for some fascinating reading.

We have scoured the service parks, pits and paddocks to come up with our stand-out performers of the last 12 months. It has, of course, been a year like no other. Most racing engines were kept silent until the middle part of the year and fans were locked out of race meetings and rallies as the world struggled to wake up from the enforced sabbatical from the sport we all love.

But what was evident when the motors finally fired into life was the passion remained as strong as ever and the hunger from the racers and the spectators themselves was highly evident. Entry lists were bulging and the turnstiles were clicking with excited fans who were finally able to go and watch motorsport again.

In the end, the competitions all took place and there were champions crowned and that is what we have sought to highlight here.

In looking back over the action we have all enjoyed in recent months, we have not just selected the champions and the headline-makers as the recipients of our initial awards. Motorsport is about so much more than just the trophies and there are numerous untold stories and near-misses that are just as meritorious when you consider all that takes place on the track or on the stages.

Our experts – who spend every weekend stage-side or on the spectator banks – have carefully looked through the nominations from the head-turning performances and we have pinpointed our initial winners. It is unlikely that everyone will agree with all of the choices, but that is one of the joys of dissecting the competition that is played out in front of us every year.

We couldn't, of course, have done this Awards Special without the support of our partners Cataclean and the input from our knowledgeable and dedicated readership. The online polls that we ran to unearth the National Rally Driver of the Year and the National Racing Driver of the Year were a huge success, and we owe a debt of gratitude to everyone who took the time to make their voices heard.

Matt James
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CONTENTS

MOTORSPORT NEWS AWARDS 2021 in association with CATACLEAN

Rolling back the years
Historic Driver of the Year **P22**

The king of grassroots
Sporting Scene Driver of the Year **P23**

The National express
National Racing Driver of the Year **P24**

Shooting for the top
Rising Star of the Year **P27**

Taking centre stage
National Rally Driver of the Year **P28**

Making the dream work
The Team of the Year **P31**

Operating at the forefront
Organising Club of the Year **P32**

The hardest battlers
The Series of the Year **P33**

Keeping the thrills alive
The Event of the Year **P34**

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MOTORSPORT NEWS AWARDS 2021
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Historic Driver of the Year

Fred Wakeman (left) and Pat Blakeney-Edwards (right)

Photos: Paul and Ben Lawrence

Woodcote Trophy win came in the Cooper T38

HISTORIC DRIVER OF THE YEAR: PATRICK BLAKENEY-EDWARDS

Paul Lawrence talks to a true all-rounder in the classics world

Patrick Blakeney-Edwards, Motorsport News's historic driver of the year, is a true all-rounder and has had a fine season racing at all of the major historic racing festivals.

PB-E, now 52, is equally at home in a 1960s sports-racer and in a pre-war Frazer Nash, which is where it really all began. But he's also extremely competitive in hillclimbs and vintage trials. He is relatively unusual in handling both pre- and post-war machines and his business, Blakeney Motorsport, is a major presence in the historic racing paddock.

The story starts with his father who was into vintage cars. "The passion for cars comes from him. My father was a very clever self-taught engineer and as children we all learnt mechanical skills from him, rebuilding cars in the workshop and teaching us to weld and build at a very young age."

But it was not cars that occupied the dreams and ambitions of the young Patrick and school did not go well. "I didn't do very well in school and, in fact, I got virtually zero academic results. All I really wanted to do was be a drummer in a band, which I was for five or six years. My brother and I had a rock band until our late 20s. It was called K-Passa and was basically a folk rock band."

Think Mumford and Sons 30 years ahead of its time and you get an idea of the music they were making.

"We never made any money but we played main stage at Glastonbury a couple of times and main stage at Reading, which was pretty cool," adds Blakeney-Edwards. "We were big in the West Country in Bristol and Bath and quite big on the university scene. That all stopped in my late 20s. It was a properly misspent youth and I had no money, living in a squat with lots of angry boys and girls and my liver hanging out!"

Variety is the spice: the evocative livery on the BMW CSL

When the realisation struck that the band was not going to make it really big, it was time for a drastic change of direction. "I thought what the hell am I going to do?," The obvious and perhaps only answer was to get into old cars. "So I set up a business working on old cars."

The recession of the early 1990s didn't help the situation, but Patrick was savvy enough to see the way forward. He explains: "One of my heroes was Martin Stretton, a leading driver in Frazer Nashes at the time. I clocked that he was quite successful and didn't advertise much. His reputation was boosted by his prowess as a racing driver."

PB-E started working on Frazer Nash road cars and that soon led to working on race cars and, in due course, racing them. "I ended up driving a lot of things and because I did so much of it, and still do, became relatively handy at it," he says.

Three decades later the business is now pretty big with 25 staff at a base in Buntingford in Hertfordshire. "I think one of the key successes in the business has been that it's an eclectic mix of cars. Frazer Nash has always been a backbone but we've run so many different cars. We do a lot of 1950s cars and Jaguar-engined cars, including HWMs and E-types. We run a couple of AC Cobras and a Bizzarrini. We've always had an ethos that the only way you're ever going to win a race is by finishing it," he adds.

The business is split into four departments: restoration, Frazer Nashes, a race shop of about 12,000 square feet, and an engine department with its own dyno. PB-E says: "We've got six engine builders and the current tally is 27 engines on the go. We've done four or five 8C Alfa Romeos and we've got three in at the moment. We've just finished the rebuild of the famous long-chassis 8C that came second at Le Mans in 1932."

In terms of his own racing, Patrick is often sharing cars with Fred Wakeman and they have enjoyed outstanding success. The Donington Historic Festival has been a happy hunting ground for them over the years and this year they shared four different cars. Their Frazer Nash TT Replica claimed a podium in a sensational 'Mad Jack' Pre-War Sports Car race and they won the Woodcote Trophy race in their Cooper-Jaguar T38.

"Fred is a rapid driver and we make quite a formidable team," PB-E says. "In the Cooper Jaguar we've won four out of six rounds with Motor Racing Legends. In the works single-seater Frazer Nash I put it on pole at Monaco by about two seconds. Sadly in the race the engine started spitting back three quarters of the way through and we had to park it.

"Next year we're doing the Le Mans Classic with the Lister Coupe. We're going to do quite a bit of Peter Auto stuff with the Cobra and the BMW CSL 'Batmobile'. That was out a couple of times this year and that's the newest car I race at the moment. It's one of my favourite cars. It is highly original and I love driving real cars. It's a pretty cool way of life and I can't complain!"

The thrill of the rolling back the years by off-roading

As well as being an accomplished racer, Blakeney-Edwards is equally at home in speed events and trials where he has two of his own cars to ensure that there are not too many motorsport-free weekends in the season.

Two hillclimbing successes stand out in his reflections on the 2021 season. "This has been a great year," he explains. "On the vintage front we've had a very successful time with my Frazer-Nash Supersports, including fastest time of the day at Shelsley Walsh and Loton Park. The Nash has only got a 1500cc engine but they do go very well. They don't have the straightline speed of the ERA and so you have to make up for that in bravery. It's been a case of scaring myself stupid!

"One of my favourite cars is a little 'top hat' Austin 7 that we use in VSCC trials. It looks like a humble shopping car but we've got a full race supercharged engine in it. It's got some real go and on the road sections between the hills you've got to be so careful because the brakes aren't up to much!"

Business and fun: Frazer-Nash

AWARDS SPECIAL

MOTORSPORT NEWS AWARDS 2021
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Sporting Scene Driver of the Year

The Vauxhall Tigra man has got used to winning feeling

Photos: mkpics.net

Waller-Barrrett has worked hard on his NHR machine

SPORTING SCENE DRIVER OF THE YEAR: CARL WALLER-BARRETT

Matt James spoke to the man who has unlocked some short oval pace in 2021

Certain people's wisdom says that good things come to those who wait. National Hot Rod English points champion Carl Waller-Barrett knows this only too well.

The Vauxhall Tigra driver's development programme with his machine was stunted in the 2019-2020 campaign. He only took part in a selected number of races as he aimed to perfect the handling on his rear-wheel-drive spaceframed car, but then the world stopped due to Covid.

Any plans for the East Anglian to show his hand, and the worth of his hard graft in the workshop, at the winner-takes-all 2020 World Final in Ipswich were swiftly taken away as all racing was canned.

The winner of the 2021 Motorsport News Sporting Scene Driver of the Year accolade has now got his show back on the road and a remarkable run in recent months means he is within touching distance of topping the 2021-2022 points (the season started in July and will conclude in May 2022).

After the enforced lay-off from racing due to the pandemic, Waller-Barrett has become the form man. Prior to last weekend's round at Hednesford, the 32-year-old had won three NHR rounds in a row of the seven that had been held. Even so, the World Final (held in September) was a huge disappointment when his clutch failed before he could even get going in the 75-lap race.

"We had spent that bit-part 2019-2020 season working out how to get more speed from the car," explains Waller-Barrett. "Now, though, it finally seems that we have managed to unlock something special from it in terms of the handling. You can't really do much with the power – although we changed camshafts at the start of this year because we wanted a bit more grunt out of the corners – but it was all down to setting the car up right."

Ipswich, the home of regular in-season rounds and the major showpiece World Final, is the Mecca for National Hot Rod fans. Waller-Barrett knew that fact and worked hard on curing his Ipswich ills. A win at the Angie Rowe Thunder 500 this year and a further win in a points-paying round proved that his Foxhall Heath jinx is behind him.

"I had never gone well there before and we really worked hard on sorting that out. It seems we now have," he explains. "We won both of those races at Ipswich quite convincingly, so we are hoping that we have started to turn a corner at the track.

"I have always been a bit better on the smaller tracks like Northampton, Birmingham or Aldershot. I always go quite well at Lochgelly in Scotland [the scene of his two European championship victories].

"I think that's because I have got more racecraft about me because I have been at it since I was 10 years old when I started in Ministox. You have to be able to read a race to try and get past people because you were always starting from the back, so that is something I am quite used to.

"But for me now, it seems to have clicked everywhere. You see that happen to some drivers: it happened to [2019 World Final winner] Rob McDonald, there are drivers like Glenn Bell, who is dominant in Northern Ireland. There's probably me, Billy Wood and McDonald who are doing it in England at the moment."

The English battlers will be scrapping for points, but with success in the regional competition comes the golden ticket: qualification for the World Final. With the Foxhall Heath blues behind him, 2022 will represent Waller-Barrett's best chance yet.

"When I was younger, all I wanted to do was win a championship and I have ticked a couple of those off, but there are two that are firmly in my sights now: the National Championship [at Hednesford in August] and the World Final," he says. "The World is the one that everyone is chasing and that is the one that we blow all of our money on."

The reason that Waller-Barrett will be more desperate than ever to claim the World Final in 2022 is one that is very close to home. Carl's son Kian Waller-Barrett is the next generation. The eight-year-old has just begun his own short oval career in the Ninja Kart category. "How long I will be desperate to chase points for if he gets into it, who knows?" jokes Waller-Barrett Sr. "Kian could end up taking up a lot of my time and focus…" ■

A passion for the short oval sport that needs to be ignited

A driver who graduates from short oval racing to the longer tracks usually stands out. They have a refreshing and inventive way of looking at an overtaking opportunity and it is one that is a delight to watch.

But the bigger tracks have no appeal for Carl Waller-Barrett. He explains: "I have been to a British Touring Car Championship meeting before, and we have ended up leaving halfway through the day. The cars just get too spaced out. It looks good on TV, but it is different when you are there.

"That is why I love short oval racing more than anything. There is such an appeal to seeing it. The biggest problem is that [the fans] need to go to a few meetings – maybe four or five – to get to know the drivers and what they are like in terms of their characters and styles. There needs to me more focus on the characters to draw them out and get that public interest."

The characters are what make the sport, and Waller-Barrett knows it. When asked to describe his own style, he wants the world to think of him as a "hard but fair" racer.

"People who are brought up in [short oval racing] love it, but others who are just coming into it aren't going to get enough exposure to get the real flavour of it," says Waller-Barrett. "You need to watch the superstars who start at the back for the first few laps – particularly in a contact formula – and you will see the real action. They get really stuck in. That is where the action is, not with the white-topped drivers at the front."

Carl Waller-Barrett under pressure from Billy Wood

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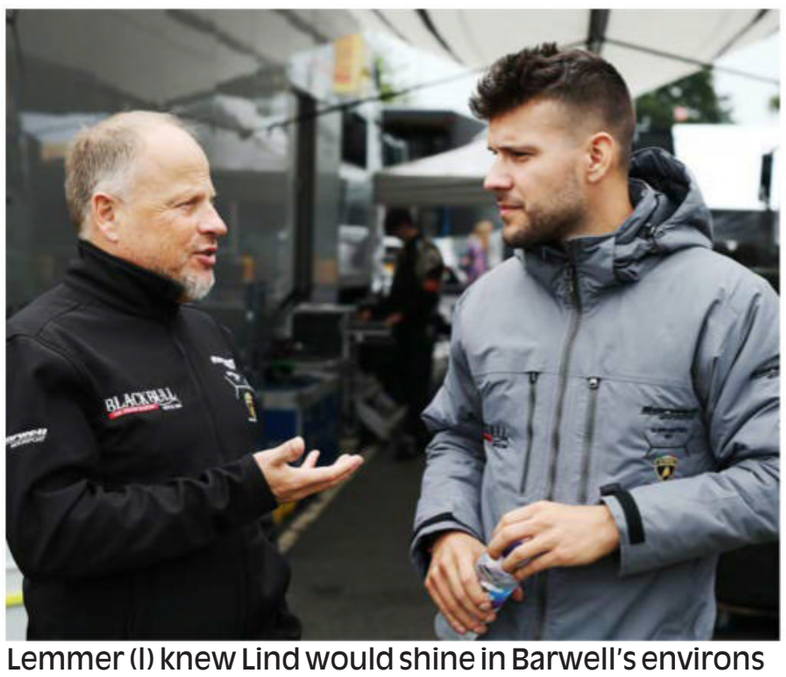
National Driver of the Year


Lemmer (l) knew Lind would shine in Barwell's environs

Lind set the standard from Brands' opening round

MN'S NATIONAL RACING DRIVER OF THE YEAR:

The Dane has bounced back this year to light up the UK circuits in British GT, as **Graham Keilloh** explains

Dennis Lind has been hard to miss in this year's British GT championship, and the dayglo livery of his Barwell Motorsport Lamborghini and matching overalls are only part of it. Lind has lit up the UK circuits as British GT's fastest and most thrilling competitor, and the thrills have taken him all the way to this year's overall drivers' title in a Pro-Am pair alongside Leo Machitski.

The thrills were there from the season's outset too, starting with a breakneck race stint after a pitstop delay in Brands Hatch's season opener.

"That's what set the tone for the year," Lind's Barwell boss Mark Lemmer tells Motorsport News, "and that is the style he likes to drive in. For me we haven't seen that kind of style in British GT since Allan Simonsen, which is spectacular."

And the man himself agrees. "[Brands] was one of those races where I was just allowed to push as much as I dared," Lind tells MN, "and then it's just been that like that all the way through the year basically, the philosophy hasn't really changed. It's just push like hell every time I get in the car and that's what I've been doing."

The Lind/Machitski pair indeed continued in that vein, again turning heads in Silverstone 500's round two by again tearing past opponents after a delay, this time Machitski spinning on lap one. At Donington Park's round three their early woe was definitive, as Machitski collected the spun Michael Igoe's WPI Lamborghini at Turn 1, ending both of their days.

But in round four at Spa, where Machitski specialises, the Barwell Lambo disappeared into the distance to win and they took a championship lead they never would relinquish.

And 28-year-old Lind's rising star this year was unlikely. It came off the back of a 2020 in which he slipped away from British GT after one round with WPI then later, for 2021, was dropped as a Lamborghini factory driver. Lind even considered stepping away from racing altogether. And this followed a 2019 wherein he had health problems, to the point that as soon as the British GT season ended he was airlifted to an Italian medical centre.

"I was just tired of all the negativeness that was going on," Lind says of where he was 12 months ago, "so I thought now racing is also being one of them and I really just wanted to get rid of it because I wanted to be in a better place personally. So if Barwell wouldn't have called me I would have been pretty unbothered about it for at least a year."

Fortunately though Barwell knew what the pleasant and engaging Lind could do, having worked with him in 2019 including in winning the Barcelona 24 Hours (see sidebar). It knew the Dane only required the right circumstances.

Lemmer recalls: "Dennis and Leo had already worked together when we won the Barcelona 24 hours so I knew that they would form a great partnership and I'd seen Dennis's ability but he wasn't in a happy place last year. So I knew the [Barwell] environment would be good for him and he thrived in it."

Indeed he did. "Already before the season we were on our second test day and the energy in the team was just different," Lind says. "People were happy to be there, the team manager wasn't too stressed about a lot of things, and it was just a very relaxed environment.

"Many big professional teams they have this very stressed and very anxiety-driven approach to racing like they have to perform every time they go out whereas if you're with Barwell you're completely fine to take a few laps to learn something.

"All people in Barwell are racers at heart and there's not a lot of politics going on inside the team, everyone is what you see is what you get, and I really appreciate that. Absolutely they are lovely people all of them."

Lind also struck gold with his 'Am' driving partner Machitski. "It's a lot of fun, there's never a normal day with Leo – well they have become normal now," Lind laughs.

"Leo has become a very very good friend of mine, I talk to him nearly every day. We have a very very good relationship, we've grown very close over the year, I spend most of my time during the season at his place.

"He's a very experienced businessman and very experienced person so I have been leaning against him a little

Lind impresses Barwell with his Barcelona sacrifice

For Barwell Motorsport boss Mark Lemmer, 2019's Barcelona 24 Hours was what really convinced him about Dennis Lind.

"When you win a fairly decent event like that you learn a lot about each other," Lemmer tells Motorsport News, "you end up respecting each other's skillsets."

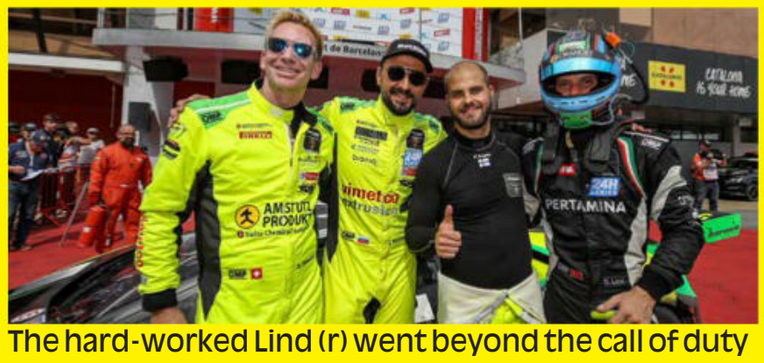
So what was it in particular that convinced Lemmer there? "Oh man," Lind says when asked by MN.

"I did 11 hours 47 minutes of that race and the maximum driving time you could do was 12 hours. I remember being pretty knackered by the end.

"I made a really really big sacrifice because it was my eighth or ninth weekend on the bounce for racing [while I was unwell].

"I was already pretty destroyed as I arrived to Spain because I'd just driven Suzuka so I had jet lag. We were on pole, Patrick Kujala did the lap time, and after [race] stint one he got heat stroke.

"I was the only pro left with Leo [Machitski] and Adrian Amstutz who were only there really to complete two hours each. So that meant that I had to drive a whole lot all of a sudden; pretty much every other stint I was in the car for a double [stint]."



The hard-worked Lind (r) went beyond the call of duty

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Petr Fryba

What a difference a year makes... Lind is all smiles

DENNIS LIND

bit to also learn about the whole business aspect of things especially in racing and just the psychology behind business. So Leo has been a key factor in this year but also a key factor in how I started to enjoy racing again this year."

It all added up not only to Lind and Machitski's British GT title, but to Lind being sure of it from an early point of proceedings.

"As a driver or me as a person it's quite normal to set quite high expectations for everything and I'm pretty sure that from Brands Hatch I knew that we were going to win the championship," Lind says. "And how I don't know but sometimes it's just a feeling, you know.

"And at Donington when Leo he –let's say –got in the way of that [with the early retirement] I was not too concerned really, I always knew that we were the better pairing of everyone.

"We got along really well off the track so we could speak about all these things as well and [it] just created some comedy between it all and even if there was pressure or something we just dealt with it and got on with it so in that sense we were pretty confident about the championship all the way through."

Not that abandoning hope is in Lind's racing nature. "I'm quite persistent about things, I don't give up," he adds. "Even if we spun out lap one and we're P20, I don't like to give up. You can still have a fun race being 28th making your way through the field, you might not gain a lot of points but you might also get lucky. I've had so many situations in my career where I've been taken out and then there's been a safety car and I found myself in second or third and ending up winning championships like that.

"So I don't lose motivation from being spun out or having a contact or something like that, quite the contrary, I'm losing interest and concentration easier if I'm leading the race. So one of my strong points is that I don't like to give up no matter what the situation is." ■

> ***"I knew from the first round we would prevail"***
>
> ***Dennis Lind***

Lind benefited from Leo Machitski as his partner

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Rising Star of the Year

Bearman has seen the chequered flag on three fronts

Photos: ACI Sport, ADAC Motorsport, Jakob Ebrey

Teen sensation Bearman had plenty to celebrate

MN'S RISING STAR OF THE YEAR: OLLIE BEARMAN

Verstappen-type maturity has led to the 16-year-old Briton stunning on three fronts in 2021, by **Graham Keilloh**

'Rising star' is an appropriate epithet for Ollie Bearman in 2021. After a 2020 spent sampling ADAC and Italian Formula 4, this year the super confident and super quick 16-year-old Briton has taken both categories by storm. Plus he's guested at three GB3 rounds, and taken those by storm too. The stats from the year (see right) speak for themselves.

Yet if anything context makes them even more impressive. In ADAC F4 and GB3 two-thirds of the races have a reversed grid (something also making his pole stats more impressive). While in his GB3 time a radiator problem, a wheel detaching plus being caught out by late rain cost him three more probable podium finishes including at least one more win.

So what lies behind Bearman's stunning stats? A good person to ask is his performance coach Enzo Mucci. And for the best illustration we can look at Mucci's first impressions of his young charge.

"With him it was immediate speed," Mucci tells Motorsport News. "Even though I wasn't there at the first few tests, I heard that straight away they were working on details rather than 'this is how you brake, this is where you brake' and all the basics. And then when I saw him he was already down the line somewhat.

"And style wise, it's not seen very often but he's just super fast and happy to dance with the car immediately and that's something people look for in a driver. When they can feel what the car is doing as it communicates to them and he adjusts accordingly instead of being told 'right, next session you're going to try and do this and that', he actually goes and finds the grip."

It's something Mucci doesn't see often. One time he did see it, it was from rather a prestigious figure. "At that age, I saw it once in [Max] Verstappen because we were in the same team as him when he was 16, it's like they're already seasoned drivers," Mucci explains. "It's actually going out and being fast immediately on lap one and that was what the most striking thing [about Bearman] was. So yes people can point to car control and good at warming up tyres and things but it's having the confidence to do that and that's what stood out the most. And since then you can see it just carries on."

It's something particularly helpful in a season such as Bearman's where he fought on several fronts. "Even when he's jumping from car to car, as he had done this week, he's done five cars this week already, he's immediately fast on lap two and that again is quite rare at that age," Mucci continues.

"Also for me it's the intelligence, he's not like talking to a 16 year old that's for sure, he's very quick minded so when he's even doing the data he's already pretty much predicting how you're going to finish the sentence and he's already moving on to the next thing, so you have to pull up your own boot straps to keep up with him. He's so intelligent and above his years. I have seen [intelligence like it] but not very often.

"It's just the age thing. They get there, a lot of them, but it's just what [Bearman] came to the table with from the outset, so it makes things very easy. He works in an adult environment very easy as well, he challenges them – intellectually sometimes. He's on hyper speed put it that way, mentally."

Bearman last week took part in FIA Formula 3's post-season test, in advance of his hoped-for graduation for 2022, and was sixth fastest on the second day. And again the detail of his performance outstrips the numbers.

"To jump in the F3 car this week it was a different style as you can imagine," Mucci outlines, "with the F4 you brake, you come off the brake, you wait for it to settle and then you go, but with the F3 car you can't have any coast time.

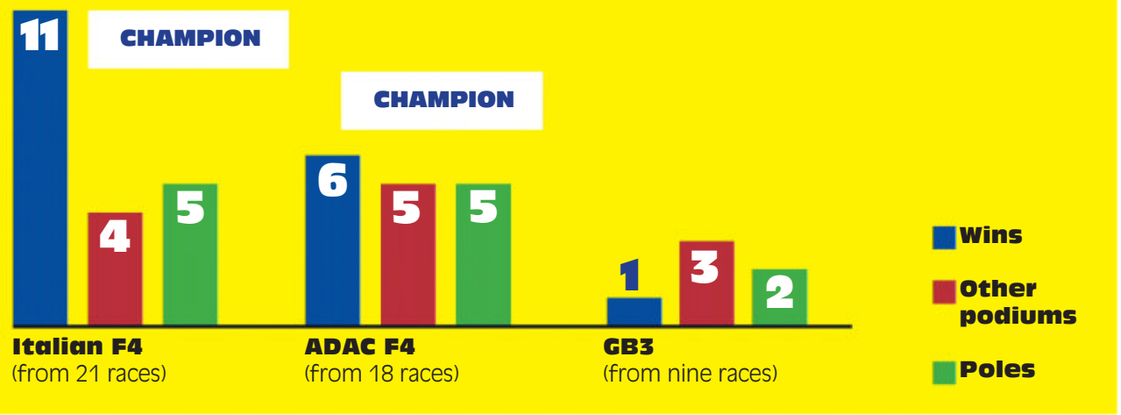
"He drove like he thought he should to start with and it took one run for him to see on the data that you can with this car always make sure that something's happening on the pedals to make the platform do what you want it to.

"And then by run two he was already driving the correct procedure. So then it's just a case of learning the Pirelli tyres straight away, so once again you're not spending a long time talking about all the things you would with a normal rookie.

"There is absolutely no alarm bells going off in my head that's for sure, it's all finessing and detailed and keeping growing and getting ready for what happens when you step up to the big leagues." ■

Bearman at 16 reminds his coach of Max Verstappen's development at the same age

BEARMAN'S 2021 VITAL STATISTICS



"He's fast and happy to dance with the car"

Enzo Mucci

Bearman dipped into GB3 this year and stunned there

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National Rally Driver of the Year

Creighton and co-driver Regan have 77 starts together

Creighton dominated Mull using savvy from the JWRC

CREIGHTON VOTED FIRST-EVER MN NATIONAL RALLY

Crowning a brilliant season in British and World junior competition, William Creighton gives his reaction to becoming the

This is the first time I've been selected for an award where you can't do anything really yourself to enhance your chances of winning it, so I have to thank everybody that did vote for me. They obviously think that I've done enough to deserve their votes, so I'm very grateful for that.

I certainly owe the biggest thanks to my dad [historic rally stalwart Niall Creighton]. I think he gets as much enjoyment from coming to the rallies and watching me do well as he does from competing himself. I wouldn't have been able to do what I've done in the last three or four years without 'the management'! We've also had a great team at DGMsport with Johnny and all the mechanics there, they've got so much experience at every level.

I totted it up the other day that Liam [Regan, co-driver], and I have done 77 rallies together. That started way back in Irish Super 1000 and we also did the championship across the water… we've been together a long time and Liam has taught me a lot of what I know now so he's had a huge part to play. Nowadays there is so much work that goes into events, especially at the World level, and Liam has put in a big effort this year before and during the events and I'm very grateful for that.

Doing the Junior British Rally Championship this year was very important to me: you get plenty of experience on gravel and it's a very well-run championship. It went one-make in 2020 and it was a big effort for us to get a Fiesta, we were used to the Peugeot 208, so with limited mileage we weren't 100% comfortable but we managed to go to our first event on the Cambrian and get a win. That was a brilliant start, and our thinking was that if we could win that championship in 2020 we could secure the 60,000 euro prize fund from M-Sport and Pirelli towards the JWRC and then along came Covid...

Even without the prize fund we still managed to compete in a full JWRC campaign this year and to be honest I have to thank the Motorsport Ireland Rally Academy, particularly John Coyne and the support that he's giving it, and the Academy is getting a lot of traction in Ireland over the last couple of years. Through them, the opportunity to go to Rome and compete in the ERC as a junior at the end of last year was a brilliant experience: we got a flavour of international competition and we were able to show good pace, we came into the first service in third position so that was a surprise.

I've got to say that my fitness probably wasn't where it was now before joining the Rally Academy programme. Particularly in 2020 when there wasn't much rallying. My improvements in that respect are down to the work we've been able to do with Human Centred Movement as part of the Rally Academy, with nutritionist Kate McDaid and psychologist Alan Heary. They have done so much work with Liam, myself and all the drivers involved in the programme and it's really paid off well, it's given a vast amount towards being able to perform as I need to on these longer events.

I'm so glad to have been putting as much effort as I have on my physical fitness because WRC is really a week of non-stop recce, watching footage and then the rally starts on Thursday usually and it's relentless from then on. It's not a physical fitness in that you have to lift a certain weight or run a certain time but you have to have the stamina to stay concentrated throughout the week because one mistake will punish you very heavily.

What I've learned and how I've progressed as a driver, as well as the 100 other things that you learn from competing in the World championship, I've definitely been able to bring that back to the British championship. I did the British championship for the first time in 2017 and I was racing the likes of Callum Devine, who had a lot of Tarmac experience like myself, but we neither of us had a lot of gravel experience. He's a very quick driver and we fought hard and I just missed out on the championship. Maybe this year.

I've had four BRC wins so far in 2021, and if you'd have said that to me in 2017 I'd have bitten your arm off for it! It's not easy to achieve that in any class, never mind in Junior BRC events. They don't come easy, but to me it shows just what we are able to bring back from the Junior WRC and I think a lot of it is down to

Mentioned in dispatches: the drivers YOU applauded in 2021

While hailing William Creighton's triumph in the polls as the first-ever recipient of Motorsport News's National Rally Driver of the Year award, it is only fitting to salute the other contenders for the crown who were shortlisted beside him.

Few drivers in any discipline will have a season like Garry Pearson in 2021, who is on course to sweep the BTRDA Gold Star, Welsh, Scottish and British National championships. The Scot has been an indomitable force on the national stages this year and captured a decent share of the vote as a result.

Not surprisingly the British Rally Championship provided the lion's share of contenders for the MN award, with three drivers in the running. Series perennial Rhys Yates may have had a below-par year but the esteem of the sport's fans runs high for this man, who joined title contenders Osian Pryce and Matt Edwards as those from the main BRC who garnered a strong following in the public vote.

The MN-backed Circuit Rally series also proved a hit, with champion Mark Kelly and frontrunning GT convert Frank Bird high in the pecking order among voters, proving that the compact event format is a winner with fans. Kelly returns to defend his crown this year.

BTRDA youngster George Lepley was also a popular choice, while from Scotland the evergreen talents of David Bogie and Jock Armstrong drew huge support. All of our stars gave us tremendous season of rallying.

Yates remains a firm favourite for British rally fans

Photos: Motorsport Images, mcklein-imagedatabase.com

Ypres ended early but was Creighton's WRC highlight

AWARD WINNER

first holder of MN's premier rally award

the pacenotes. WRC stages are very tricky and technical and you get two recce passes before you're taking them flat out.

I've even written completely new notes for the Cambrian last weekend. My perception of things has just changed so much, my old notes were pretty much irrelevant and it's a measure of how far that international experience takes you.

Another great thing about the JWRC is that you're part of the M-Sport set-up and treated exactly the same as the actual works drivers. That teaches you so much in terms of how to communicate with the mechanics, the engineers, the guys who are reading the data and then of course we had Jon Armstrong there with a lot of experience of those events so it was really nice to have him there and we got quite close over the year. I was very disappointed for him that he just missed out on the championship this year but all the drivers were very nice and I definitely made friends there.

It's not all smiles round the camp: it's competitive and drivers have bad days but that's the nature of rallying. You can't be happy all the time, but I've really enjoyed competing with those guys and I'm sure that a few of them are going to be part of the World championship for many years to come.

To be able to pitch yourself against them is a great opportunity, and it's great that Malcolm [Wilson] is there, he can just walk round the corner and he knows exactly who you are and you can have a good conversation. It's a great relationship to have and Maciej Woda, the boss of M-Sport Poland, has been great, as have all the team.

It's difficult to pick a favourite event from 2020 but Mull was a highlight. Liam and I did a good job, we were on the back foot to start with because of some technical problems but for our first time against guys who have been there quite a few times it was nice to show what the little Rally4 car can do – especially in the dark whenever the rain is coming at you sideways.

Mull isn't like any other rally, you rally all day and you rally all night and any stage that you do in the dark makes the hairs on the back of your neck stand on end. Rallying until 1700hrs and then starting again at 2100hrs meant that you had to stay focused and not switch off between the daylight and the dark stages

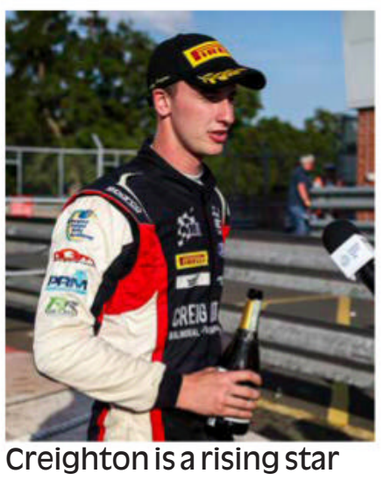
On the WRC, I think Ypres was the stand-out. I'd been there before with the British championship, so I had a bit of pressure. Unfortunately, the car let us down early in the rally, but the atmosphere is always incredible even just as a national round and with the World cars there it was really special. I was disappointed to be out, but watching the speed that the WRC cars can carry with their aero on those very narrow roads was just something extraordinary, really.

Next year the Junior WRC is going to Rally3, a four-wheel-drive car, and if at all possible that's where I want to be. It made sense to try and put a bit of a programme together this year with both the BRC and WRC events and I'd just love to tick it off and win the British championship at home in Ulster. It's the most important rally of the year in some ways, having competed on the BRC for so long and grown up there.

I've done a couple of small rallies in an R5 before so four-wheel drive isn't a new concept. With the JBRC title comes the offer of a prize drive from Hyundai at a World event and I also have a test with Hyundai from a previous award so there's two chances to try a really quick Rally2 car and go up against some quick drivers. That is only going to be a benefit if you're going to be doing the JWRC in 2022, and it's great to get to know people at Hyundai as well as at M-Sport – although team bosses might not agree about that!

Motorsport News is a very popular paper for any enthusiast. For me, we have it every week in my house and me and my dad take an interest in reading it… any time I hear my dad getting the scissors out I know it's been a good weekend because we've got a mention! So, to be recognised by the paper was one thing but to actually win it was another. I'm really happy to be the award winner, it's a really nice thing to round out the season, a great award to have and a great thing to add to my rallying CV. Thank you. ■

After four seasons, the Junior British title beckons



Creighton is a rising star

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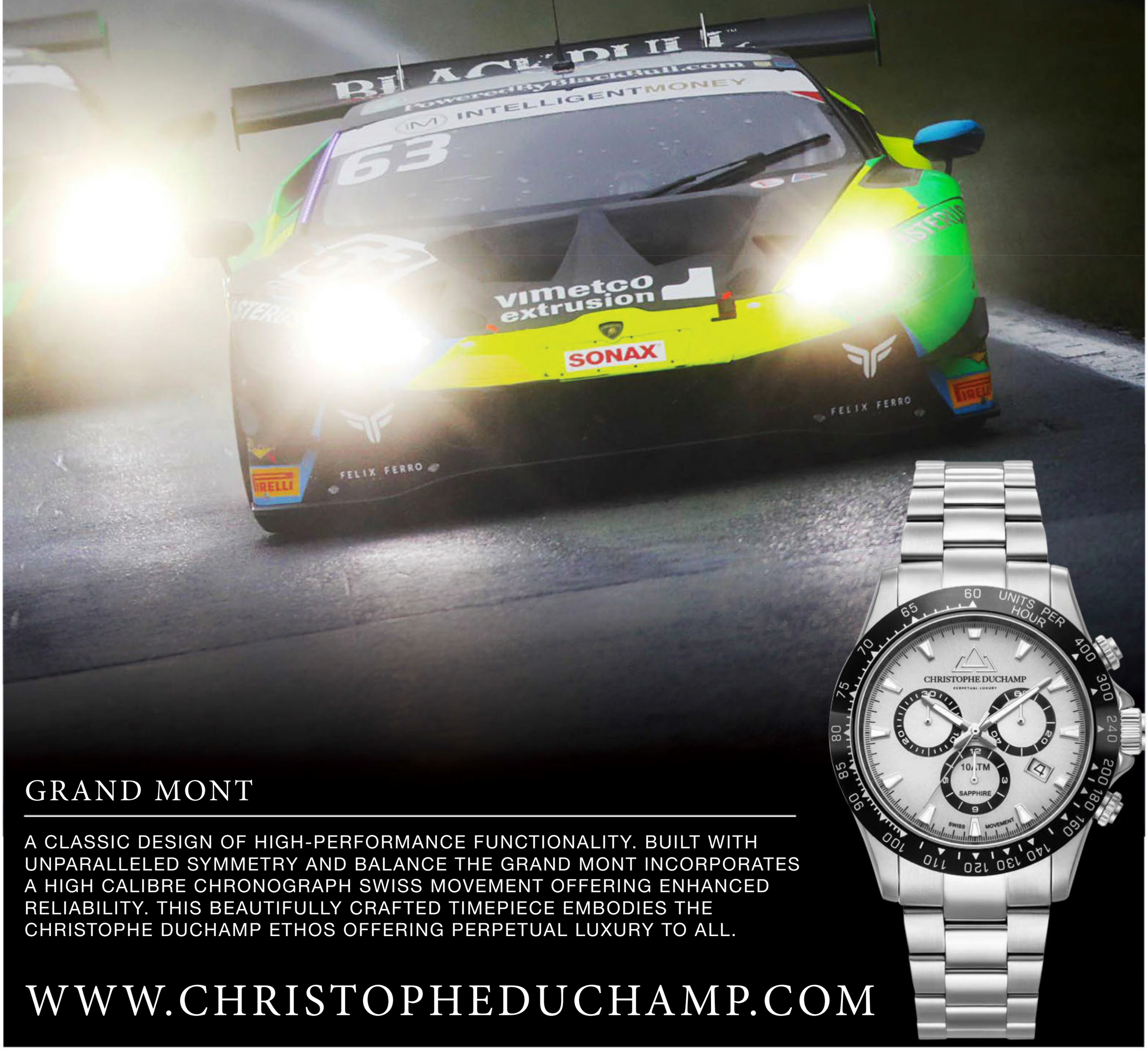

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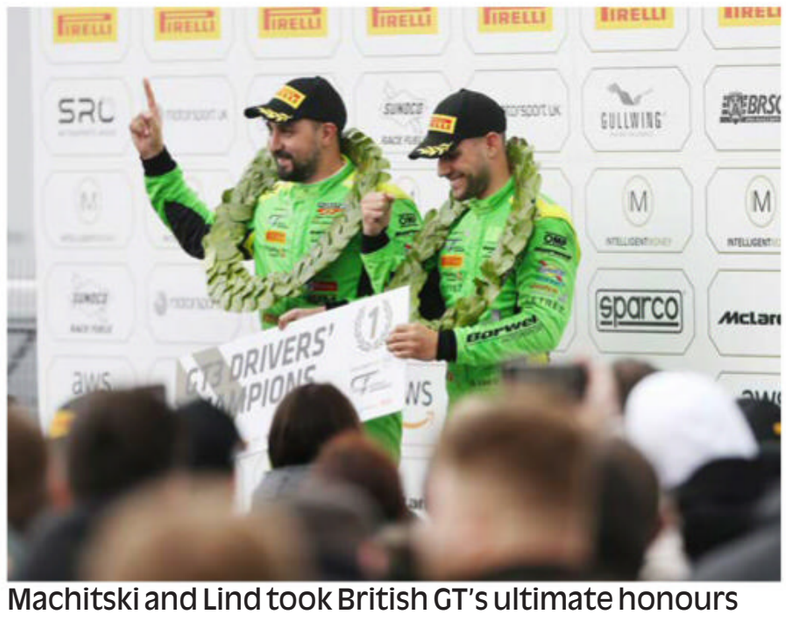
Team of the Year

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, GTWorld Challenge Europe

Barwell took its second British GT double in a row

Balon/Mitchell's #1 Lambo paired with Machitski/Lind


Machitski and Lind took British GT's ultimate honours

MN'S TEAM OF THE YEAR: BARWELL MOTORSPORT

Preparation, experience and camaraderie helped Barwell win honours at home and abroad in 2021, by **Graham Keilloh**

Lamborghini Huracan-specialist Barwell Motorsport in 2021 claimed its second British GT drivers' and teams' championship double in a row. Leo Machitski and Dennis Lind took impressive overall honours, while Adam Balon alongside 2020's overall champion Sandy Mitchell were well in the mix and ensured a Barwell 1-3 in the drivers' standings. Both were new Pro-Am pairings.

Barwell's honours weren't only confined to the UK, as it also claimed 2021's GT World Challenge Europe drivers' and teams' Pro-Am championship double with Miguel Ramos and Henrique Chaves behind the wheel, while Mitchell and Machitski joined the line-up for its Spa 24 Hours class podium.

"There were several key factors," Barwell boss Mark Lemmer tells Motorsport News about the team's ultra-successful year. "We were well prepared for the season and we hit the ground running with a good car and a good driver line-up with a good test programme. And we capitalised on circuits that we knew would be good for us but we also improved our performance on the weaker circuits.

"All the drivers stepped up their game this year, Adam and Sandy also did a phenomenal job and they were unlucky to not score in the first round, had they have scored they would have been right in the [title] contention at that finale.

"But another key factor in the overall team performance was the fact that all four of the [British GT] drivers got on so well and the spirit in the camp and the garage was fantastic this year and that positive energy adds another dimension."

This was something noticed by new recruit and eventual British GT champion Lind. "[It's] very uncommon to me that you have such a good relationship across two cars," Lind tells MN. "Normally of course the mechanics and engineers, they speak together, but between the drivers I don't think we've actually been able to notice a big difference of who is in what car because we've all been speaking to each other on a very friendly level. It's just been a very very very healthy non-toxic environment to be in."

Lemmer reckons it had a particularly positive impact on his new champion. "A couple of tests in it was such a happy positive camp and Sandy and Dennis got on like a house on fire, and Leo and Adam also get on well," Lemmer notes, "so all those things combined to create a super-positive environment. But probably no-one benefited more from that than Dennis, that gave him confidence and allowed him to step up to the potential that we knew he had."

There's also a technical edge to Barwell. "Lamborghini pretty much leave us to our own devices," Lemmer explains, "we have an excellent relationship with them but they know that we know our thing and we've got some really good brains at Barwell. But we've also got a huge database of information having run the Lambos for five years, we draw upon that database and with my knowledge of working with the drivers, it's a combination that we know works internationally and in British GT."

Lind agrees: "They know a lot about the car and a lot about the tracks but they also do a really good job of getting the right engineers, Charles [Hodge] who's been on my car this year has been absolute joy to work with, the sister car's engineer Matt [Beers] is also a very very great guy who [has just started working in] Formula E so it tells the level of technical knowledge they have within Barwell; Charles, he works for Audi most of the time, and Matt in Formula E.

"And then Mark himself he also has a lot of technical knowledge because he's a racer himself, so he knows a lot about the whole driving dynamics aspect of it and he knows the tracks really well. And it's so easy to get help if you just ask, that's the one thing it's been super nice about being there."

And to think too that before 2020 Barwell was developing an unwanted reputation of being British GT's drivers' championship bridesmaids, after several near misses since its previous 2014 crown with Ecurie Ecosse.

"There was probably too long a gap before winning these two titles last year and this year," Lemmer concedes, "however we've always been in contention at the last round, either leading or second, so the performance level of the team's been there.

"But unfortunately the nature of British GT is that it generally comes down to the last two hours, the amateur driver having to start the race and that's huge pressure on them. It's unfortunate that drivers have found trouble, but that's something that the team unfortunately can't control. We should have added three or four more titles but if we're in contention at the last round then we've done our job." ■

Barwell wins on the continental front too in GTWCE

Barwell Motorsport in 2021 won its battle on the home front of British GT, and on the continental front of GT World Challenge Europe. In the latter it took the drivers' and teams' Pro-Am titles.

"It's always fierce, GT World Challenge is one of the toughest championships in the world," boss Mark Lemmer tells Motorsport News. "We love racing at that level. There's a lot of pitstop involvement but also strategy and Miguel Ramos and Henrique Chaves drove brilliantly.

"It's always tough when you're in contention for two championships and people forget that the same cars, one weekend they're in Europe the next weekend they're in British GT. That puts a lot of pressure on the team and the crew."

And this year it was particularly challenging. "Normally we have a spare chassis," Lemmer notes, "but we lost the third car at Donington Park when Leo [Machitski] unfortunately got tangled up in that first-lap incident. So for the second half of the year we were down to two chassis with a very busy schedule including the 24 hours of Spa. Just to get everything in the right place at the right time is tricky and that's before you actually think about the performance side."

Barwell also took title double in "always fierce" GTWCE

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AWARDS SPECIAL

MOTORSPORT NEWS AWARDS 2021
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Organising Club of the Year

Fans were able to return trackside at the World Final

Photos: mkpics.net

Spedeworth hosted a stunning 118 race meets

ORGANISING CLUB OF THE YEAR: SPEDEWORTH MOTORSPORTS

Matt James speaks to boss Deane Wood about the revived 2021 short oval season

Emerging from lockdown wasn't easy for anyone and the headaches for race promoters and organisers, particularly with the fluid rules from the government, made things even harder.

Spedeworth Motorsport, the short oval kings, was one club that took the plunge as soon as it could to get action going again. It runs seven venues throughout the UK and operates upwards of 20 different short oval categories. Spedeworth is used to running up to 220 meetings per season and, despite the fact the meetings only really got going in May, the winner of the MN 2021 Organising Club of the Year still managed a whopping 118-meeting schedule for the season just gone.

Even then, the initial steps weren't easy. Spedeworth boss Deane Wood explains: "What was hard for all of us was that they kept changing the rules. One minute the so-called non-professional sports could run, and then they turned it around and it was only the elite sports that were able to take place. We were trying to do all of our planning against this backdrop which kept on shifting all the time and a lot of man hours of organisation when unrewarded."

"There was lots and lots of red tape"
Deane Wood

When the season did finally get going in the late spring, limited numbers of fans were able to attend and Spedeworth went even further than it had to in an effort to assure that the events were Covid-safe – as much as it could do, anyway. Wood ruled with a rod of iron and was often found on the spectators banks himself making sure the belt-and-braces approach paid off.

Wood says: "We had Health and Safety officers [from the local councils] at most of our events. We made sure that everyone at our meetings wore a face mask, even though it wasn't a law then.

"For me, that was to do with social distancing, which was something we couldn't guarantee. If there was a group of five people stood at a corner, how were we to know that they weren't all from the same household? Managing that was virtually impossible. That is why I made the rules that everyone had to wear a mask, because at least I could police that."

Wood is keen to pay tribute to the Spedeworth team behind the scenes for making sure that the engines fired up again and the competition continued.

He points to the colossal amount of paperwork done by his colleague Adam Leslie as an example as the firm tried to demystify the red tape.

There were some changes to the way the sport operated when it returned, and a levy on the competing drivers was one of the most notable, but it is something that Wood says will benefit the entire short oval landscape going forward.

"Competitors are now having to pay £25 to race," he says. "It wasn't just about Covid, to be honest. It wasn't actually stacking up before the health pandemic. We had to introduce a small levy, and all the competitors complained…

"It is funny but when you are flat-out working during a normal season, you don't have time to think about these things. You are just going from one meeting to the next one and to the next one.

"When you have about six months off and you are doing nothing it made me realise I had been working for free, effectively. In fact, in certain meetings, I was giving it back to the competitors if things didn't stack up financially. We had to come up with a logic to try and make the meetings that aren't so well supported break even."

The stark reality of the sport was brought into focus when the gates were locked up at the firm's venues during the height of the pandemic too. While no racing could take place and therefore no revenue was being earned, landowners still wanted rent to be paid and Spedeworth had to pay out nearly £400000 on dormant tracks just to keep them going. It is an eye-watering amount.

The hunger to get back onto the grid was strong, and Spedeworth's entries when racing was finally permitted again showed that the desire was as keen as it had ever been. While that was reflected by the amount of cars in the pits, the number of fans in the stands was more difficult to predict.

Racers including World Final winner Rob McDonald (above) enjoyed a return to action

Wood says: "We would host an event where I expected a big crowd and it didn't materialise, whereas some of the other meetings would get many more fans than I expected. It was very hard to plan anything, really. People might be picking and choosing their meetings a bit more now things are back to normal. With capacities being smaller, maybe people stayed local more often."

The high point for most formulae is the World Final meetings, where a year's efforts are rewarded with a winner-takes-all showpiece event. Some clever rescheduling meant that the blue-riband events did take place in 2021, although later in the season than planned and with some impact on spectator numbers.

"We managed to hold the World Finals that we wanted to, things like the National Hot Rod World Final and the Banger World Final, but the banger meeting was 2000 people down and the Hot Rods was 1800 down," says Wood. "But we simply had to get things running again. We started running qualifying rounds for the 2021-2022 season, and we hadn't yet run the World Final events for 2020. It was getting very confusing for people, including the drivers even after you have explained it to them. But we have things back on an even keel now."

Given the behind-the-scenes determination to get short oval sport back up and running again, it is vital that the 2022 season is a success. Spedeworth will no leave stone unturned for that. ■

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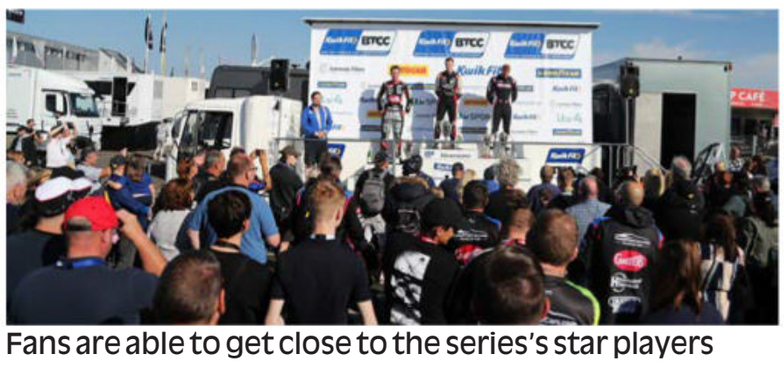
Series of the Year



Fans are able to get close to the series's star players

There is action all the way though the BTCC pack

Photos: Jakob Ebrey

The tin-top battlers fought throughout 2021 season

MN'S SERIES OF THE YEAR: BTCC

Matt James looks at the continues success of the British Touring Car Championship

As it was branded an elite form of motorsport, the British Touring Car Championship never went away during the dark days of the global health pandemic.

The calendar was reshuffled in 2020 and spectators were mostly locked out, but the drama played out in front of a growing TV audience and the lifeblood of the category kept flowing.

The 2021 championship provided 12 different winners from 30 races, a nail-biting final-round showdown and has been voted as Motorsport News's Series of the Year.

The 1992 title winner and BTCC commentator on ITV4 Tim Harvey knows why the series continues to deliver. Harvey says: "The BTCC never lost its slot at the top. It remains the pinnacle of British motorsport and it is the championship that everybody wants to be in if they can possibly can. It is also the only championship that makes sense commercially in these difficult times in terms of the general awareness of the category, the television coverage and the media it generates. It is often said but it really is the only game in town when it comes to top-line UK motorsport."

And the popularity of the championship was never more apparent than when the fans were finally let back in after the first few meetings of the 2021 schedule.

The racing remained as fierce as ever and there were five drivers who went into the showdown at Brands Hatch in with a shout of lifting the prestigious crown. In the end, it was Ash Sutton who wrapped up the spoils in Kent in his Laser Tools Racing Infiniti Q50 to make it back-to-back titles and the third of his career. Sutton did it in front of a packed house.

Harvey noticed the difference at the trackside. "You would have thought that maybe with Covid and the fact people could watch it on TV that maybe fans wouldn't come back, but I have never seen so many people at the race tracks," he says. "That has to be down to the appeal of being able to go to a live event again. It was what people were starved of for so long."

But the BTCC isn't merely about getting people through the turnstiles. There are always initiatives to keep the series outward facing and engaging for those who do part with cash to go and pay a visit.

An example of this is, where possible, the BTCC carried on its policy of reversing the pit garage set-up, so fans in the paddock could look directly into the operating bays and see what each team was up to between races.

Harvey adds: "The BTCC has always been inclusive and it has always been a family-orientated championship. The access has got better with inventions like the pit swap. But also, I think that for the first time in quite a long time, the championship has got quite a lot of personalities in it.

"There are more different characters in the series than there has been for a while and the drivers are not frightened to be themselves. They can see that the BTCC occupies a unique position with the public. A lot of drivers are engaging with social media channels. The drivers are creating images of themselves which, in turn, brings people to the races because they are able to feel more directly connected to the drivers they are watching. The drivers are more relatable and more human because of that, and I think we are in a golden period for that."

While the major players add the diversity, and the tightly defined regulations mean that no driver is able to gallop ahead of the others, meaning the action is always conducted in a pressure-cooker environment. That is why the BTCC remains at the forefront of UK racing. ■

Pushing BTCC boundaries even further with new initiatives

The British Touring Car Championship has been at the cutting edge of UK motorsport for 30 years, but even it will break new ground in 2022 when all machines adopt a hybrid power system that will give the drivers extra power.

The systems will allow competitors to use a push-to-pass boost for up to 15 seconds per lap, which they can use to pass a rival or to defend from an attack. It is a new landscape, but an interesting one and one which puts the BTCC at the forefront of alternative technologies.

Tim Harvey says: "This was something the BTCC needed to do for corporate responsibility reasons rather than to necessarily make the racing any more exciting. Having said that, it will add a new element to the racing with the push-to-pass system that will be employed by the extra hybrid power – rather than the option tyres or the extra success ballast – being the new ingredient, if you like.

"It is nice to keep things fresh. It will give us new things to talk about and new things to digest as the season unfolds. How it will all work out in the end and the technical complexities, reliability and the costs, are still all to be decided."

There are some uncertainties, but what it will do is give a new complexion to the racing and to the regular race order. It could, says Harvey, lead to some significant differences.

"It will very much play towards the cleverer drivers and the smarter teams," he adds. "One of the great features of touring car racing and the BTCC has always been the relative strengths and weaknesses of different cars on different tracks. I think this new electrification system could add that element back into it again which will be interesting to see."

Fans got a glimpse of the future at Silverstone in 2021

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AWARDS SPECIAL

Photos: Jakob Ebrey

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Event of the Year

A breakout performance got Jamie Sharp the victory

The 50th Festival final was a close and thrilling affair

MN'S EVENT OF THE YEAR: FORMULA FORD FESTIVAL

The year's was the showpiece's 50th running and the milestone was marked appropriately, by **Graham Keilloh**

Formula Ford Festival paddocks always have a buzz about them, even in this age long after its 200-plus car turnouts from around the world and the reasonable expectation that future Formula 1 stars were among them. But this year especially had a buzz.

The 2021 Festival just passed at Brands Hatch was the famous event's 50th running, and an energetic team from the organising British Racing and Sports Car Club, led by chairman and Festival racer Peter Daly, ensured that 50 wouldn't just be a number.

"We set out with the job of starting to plan and market from March, and we've got some fantastic people working with us within BRSCC," Daly tells Motorsport News. "There's a team there of part-time, permanent and volunteers that build together. There's not many motorsport competitions that have gone on for 50 years."

Daly added that, even outside the landmark half-century running, the Festival is on the up these days. And that perhaps, before the last few years, the BRSCC was guilty of treating it like just any other event.

This time the buzz was there, indeed it was greater than in had been in some years, and in advance. Not only in the numbers – with its entry pushing the three-figure mark for the first time in years – but also in the names.

These were led by 1980 Festival winner and Formula 1 podium finisher, the popular and irrepressible Roberto Moreno. Moreno's wasn't just any old entry, either. He took part in a Van Diemen RF80, similar to that he won in back in 1980.

Jonathan Lewis, having got hold of an RF80, decided to paint it in Moreno's old Canadian Club brown livery; Moreno spotted the pristine car on social media and was suitably tempted… He also had as mechanic Micky Galter, who tended his car in 1980, plus Van Diemen co-founder Ralph Firman on hand.

Reigning British GT champion, and 2010 Festival winner, Dennis Lind, was convinced to take part too, in his case having just been told off by Daly in the latter's capacity as British GT race director. And Lind in turn managed to convince to race alongside him his uncle, who just so happens to be former F1 pilot, and 1992 Festival winner, Jan Magnussen.

Even six-time IndyCar champion Scott Dixon couldn't resist, turning up under the Low Dempsey Racing team's awning to observe. Festival stalwarts such as Brian Jones, Bernard Cottrell and David Pierre were remembered at the event too.

"It's part of our British motorsport heritage," Shaun Hollamby tells MN about the Festival, "and the buzz about the place with people like Roberto Moreno, Jan Magnussen and Dennis Lind coming back. It's such a unique event, it really deserves a special place on the calendar. Maybe in the last few years it's disappeared a little bit but I think this meeting will really put it up amongst it."

The racing on Brands' claustrophobic bowl-like Indy circuit was exciting and of a high quality, and the final for the landmark running was, fittingly, a thriller. Suitably too it pitched at the sharp end established Formula Ford talents such as Joey Foster and Niall Murray, multiple Festival winners both, against exciting young hotshoes such as teenage debutant Tom Mills and Team USA Scholarship star Max Esterson, with plenty of other top-notch performers who fell between the two statuses.

Appropriately too, in the final's typical fading light, there was a mix of joy and heartache. Mills and Murray were removed in an early multi-car smash, while Foster lost what looked an apt Festival triumph hitting a damp patch still lingering after heavy morning rain.

The win went to 20-year-old Jamie Sharp, who put in a stunning breakout performance, holding off a train of attacking opponents, while the afore-mentioned Esterson rose from 13th on the grid to finish a classified second.

"It's one of the best races I've ever seen in my life to be honest," Lind tells MN. "That final was really really something else." And having had it pointed out that he was only 2.3 seconds off winning it, Lind replied: "Yeah and I was 10th! It's just crazy."

Already thoughts have turned to 2022 and there was widespread hope at Brands that this special running will also act more generally as a springboard for the event's future.

"We would like to maintain the momentum," Daly confirms, "we will be planning it [2022's Festival] very early, we have the date already for next year, and we are looking to build on the 50th anniversary to make it a must-do event."

Magnussen and Lind indeed fully intend to return next year, doing so moreover with more preparation time to boost their victory chances. And another former Festival winner, a certain Jenson Button, after watching 2021's final from afar and being suitably thrilled, indicated that he might be tempted to race himself in 2022… ■

F1 star Moreno led the line-up of famous names

THE 50TH FORMULA FORD FESTIVAL IN NUMBERS

97 Cars took part	**7** Festival winners raced	**1** From the original '72 Festival raced	**2** Ex-F1 drivers raced
1 Reigning British GT champion raced	**1** Six-time IndyCar champion attended	**2.3** Seconds covered the first 10 cars home in the final	

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BUTCHER SLAUGHTERS THEM AT SILVERSTONE
Toyota man doubles up as Sutton zeroes in on BTCC crown P28
SEPTEMBER 30 2021 ■ EVERY THURSDAY ■ £3.99 ■ FORMERLY MOTORING NEWS
Landmark result for Merc's star as he denies Norris a maiden win
LEWIS HAILS A MAGICAL MOMENT AS HE HITS A CENTURY
By Matt James
Lewis Hamilton has hailed his rivals after landing his 100th grand prix win in Russia on Sunday, snatching the victory from fellow Brit Lando Norris.
From pole position, McLaren man Norris seemed set to take his maiden victory until a late rain shower left him slithering off the circuit. Hamilton had been called in by his Mercedes team and swapped tyres. He was able to hunt down Norris and take the race win in the dying moments.
Hamilton, who finished one place ahead of his title rival Max Verstappen, says the 100-win benchmark is something he finds hard to believe.
The seven-time champion said: "It's a magical moment. I could only ever have dreamed of still being here and having this opportunity to win these races and get to drive against such phenomenal talent this late in my career and to continue to building with Mercedes. I'm so proud of everything we've done, not only on track but also off."
Full report, p4
Special feature: Lewis's best wins p30
Lewis has achieved his big target
Hamilton left it late to pounce for his 100th win
REPORT
EDWARDS TOPS A DRAMATIC TRACKROD
Volkswagen man back in the title mix with victory p18
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RACING REPORTS

Photos: mkpics.net

NATIONAL HOT RODS: HEDNESFORD BY GRAHAM BROWN — NOVEMBER 7

Cooke (524) and Blood went toe-to-toe

Cooke cemented his growing reputation

PERRY COOKE TAKES A THRILLER IN THE HILLS

After a delayed start to the meeting following a serious crash in the BriSCA F1 racecard, and a couple of slightly lacklustre heats, the Nationals came alive in their final. A nail-biting lead battle ensued between Perry Cooke and Jack Blood.

Cooke eventually ran out the winner by mere inches after Blood had been ahead several times. Peter Elliott and Mikey Godfrey took the heats, with Godfrey also a close third in the final.

The opening heat was twice interrupted by stoppages. Karl Baker set the early pace, tracked by Elliott, but they hadn't gone far before Frank West, Colin Hitch and Mark Shelper tangled on the home straight, Shelper's spun car getting hit head on by Mark Cook.

Following a clear-up, Baker and Elliott resumed their battle but not for long as Brett Collison and Shane Bland got together exiting the West Bend to bring on another caution.

When the race finally got going properly, Baker got a flyer of a start that looked as though it might well win him the race. But Elliott clearly had other ideas, closing the gap and slipping ahead six laps from home to record a rare win.

Heat two featured a good deal less drama. Elliott had pole this time and set off fast with Baker and Sam Gray following. But by mid-distance the frontrunners were being threatened by quicker cars from further down the grid, with Mikey Godfrey's Mazda RX-8, Shane Bland and John Sibbald all rapidly moving up the order. Once Perry Cooke and Andy Lane arrived on the scene as well it all got very tight up front.

Godfrey had the pressure on the leader and was eventually rewarded with a hole up the inside coming off the East Bend, Bland scooting through in Godfrey's wake to mount a lead challenge of his own, but it was still just Godfrey's at the flag.

Cooke's heat results had landed him pole for the final and he left like a dragster when the starter's eyelids twitched. But the rest made good getaways too and the leader soon had a mirror full of Gavin Murray, Blood and Godfrey. Murray made a big effort to get up the outside of the others which only succeeded in allowing Godfrey, Carl Waller-Barrett and Rob McDonald under him.

With Chris Haird rushing to join in too, any mistake by either of the lead cars would have been catastrophic in terms of places lost, but this didn't stop Blood repeatedly diving up the outside of the East Bend to snatch the lead for a few yards before Cooke took him back again.

They were still tied together at flag fall, with Cooke a few inches ahead and the rest blanketed behind, although CW-B attracted a disqualification for having caused an incident with McDonald and Bland along the way.

Results

Organiser: Incarace **When:** November 7
Where: Hednesford Hills Raceway
Starters: 33
Heat one: 1 Peter Elliott (Peugeot 206cc); 2 Karl Baker (Vauxhall Tigra); 3 Gavin Murray (Vauxhall Tigra); 4 Dick Hillard (Vauxhall Tigra); 5 Perry Cooke (Vauxhall Tigra); 6 Shaun Taylor (Ford Fiesta); 7 Carl Waller-Barrett (Vauxhall Tigra); 8 Jack Blood (Vauxhall Tigra). **Heat two:** 1 Mikey Godfrey (Mazda RX-8); 2 Shane Bland (Ford Fiesta); 3 John Sibbald (Vauxhall Tigra); 4 Cooke; 5 Andy Lane (Ginetta G40R) ; 6 Gordon Alexander (Vauxhall Tigra); 7 Chris Haird (Vauxhall Tigra); 8 Rob McDonald (Vauxhall Tigra). **Final:** 1 Cooke; 2 Blood; 3 Godfrey; 4 McDonald; 5 Haird; 6 Sibbald; 7 Jason Kew (Ginetta G40R); 8 Murray; 9 Paul Wright (Vauxhall Tigra); 10 Aaron Dew (Ginetta G40R). **Points:** 1 Wood 230; 2 Waller-Barrett 228; 3 Cooke 213; 4 Wright 207; 5 Dew 198; 6 Jason Kew 189.

BRITISH RALLYCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP: LYDDEN HILL BY HAL RIDGE — NOVEMBER 6-7

VITOLS AND THORNE SHARE THE RALLYCROSS WINS

Roberts Vitols was the comeback king in the British Rallycross Championship 5 Nations Trophy round six to claim his third win of the campaign in the opener of Lydden Hill's double-header.

Rival Jack Thorne also delivered a fightback performance to claim his maiden Supercar victory in round seven.

While young chargers claimed the weekend spoils, the battle for the 2021 title intensified. Champion Ollie O'Donovan entered the weekend with a 10-point advantage over double European champion Derek Tohill.

First blood went to Tohill, as he finished second to Thorne in qualifying on Saturday, with O'Donovan in fourth. The pair finished 1-2 in their semi-final to both start on the front row for the final, held after nightfall under floodlights.

In the final, O'Donovan made the best launch to take the lead, hounded by Tohill and polesitter Thorne on lap one. Running fourth and fifth, Vitols and Tristan Ovenden took their jokers on the next tour to cover off those who had taken the extra route on lap one, then Vitols cleared both Tohill and Thorne when they too took their jokers on lap three.

Having been hampered by power steering and engine issues in qualifying and the semi-final, Vitols executed the kind of drive that he has so many times this season in the final with staggering pace. He drove to the front of the field when leader O'Donovan took his joker on lap four. Behind Vitols' Citroen, O'Donovan and Tohill clashed side-by-side at the joker merge and contact between the pair into the next left hander was a critical point in the title race. Tohill went on to finish third behind Thorne, while O'Donovan wound up seventh with three punctures. The incident was investigated after the race and deemed by the event officials to be a racing incident.

Thorne again topped qualifying on Sunday and won his semi-final to start on pole for the final, but again he didn't make the greatest start and had to give best to Tohill at turn one. Entering the final was now tied on points with Tohill, O'Donovan headed straight for the joker on lap one, behind Julian Godfrey. Thorne dived for the joker on lap two and came out fifth, behind Ovenden but ahead of Godfrey. Once Ovenden jokered, Thorne executed a stellar lap in his Albatec Racing-built Peugeot 208 to move ahead of Tohill and Vitols when they also took their jokers. O'Donovan finished fifth, meaning Tohill now holds a three-point lead which could prove decisive. The season finale at Spa has now been shelved and series organisers are working on an alternative venue.

Vitols overcame early woe to dominate the opener

Jack Thorne took his maiden Supercar victory at Lydden

Jason Bleasdale won Supernational final, while Max Langmaid and Max Weatherley again won in the Junior and Swift Sport classes to strengthen their points leads. Dave Bellerby and Darren Scott won in BMW Mini and Super1600, while Patrick O'Donovan claimed the RX150 class title with victory and Barry Stewart wrapped up the overall Retro Rallycross Championship honours.

Results

Organiser: LHMC **When:** November 6-7
Where: Lydden Hill **Starters:** 89
Round 6: Supercar: 1 Roberts Vitols (Citroen C4) 4m27.778s; 2 Jack Thorne (Peugeot 208) +3.942s; 3 Derek Tohill (Ford Fiesta); 4 Tristan Ovenden (Citroen DS3); 5 Steve Hill (Mitsubishi Lancer); 6 Michael Sellar (Citroen DS3); 7 Ollie O'Donovan (Ford Fiesta); 8 Hal Ridge (Ford Focus). **Round 7: Supercar:** 1 Thorne 4m20.019s; 2 Tohill +1.466s; 3 Vitols; 4 Julian Godfrey (Ford Fiesta); 5 O'Donovan; 6 Ovenden ; 7 Ridge; 8 Hill. Classes Supernational: Jason Bleasdale (Vauxhall VX220); **Junior:** Max Langmaid (Suzuki Swift); **Swift Sport:** Max Weatherly (Suzuki Swift); **Super1600:** Darren Scott (Citroen C2); **BMW Mini:** Dave Bellerby (BMW Mini); ALL4Mini: Adrian Turner (BMW Mini); **Retro 4WD:** Andy Grant (Ford Focus); **Super Retro:** Jos Sterkens (Ford Escort); **Retro:** Steve Cozens (Citroen AX); **RX150:** Patrick O'Donovan (RX150 buggy)

COLUMNIST

NICK GARTON

Did the FIA Rally Star selection break the wheel of self-interest in talent spotting?

Photos: Lou Johnston / Motorsport UK

The 18 UK Rally Star hopefuls

The UK's hopes rest on these three talents

I recently attended the British selection round for the FIA's Rally Star competition: a vehicle to bring young people into the sport from all corners of the globe.

Rally Star dangles before the FIA's member clubs the carrot of six events at the wheel of an M-Sport Ford Fiesta Rally3 for each of the regional winners in 2022, with the ultimate champion claiming a fully funded season in the Junior World Rally Championship in 2023.

Motorsport was never short of these initiatives back when it was cash-rich on manufacturer and tobacco money. No less a luminary than WRC legend Carlos Sainz got his career underway with a season in Formula Ford via the Marlboro Challenge. With such big commercial investments consigned to the past, however, motorsport itself must look harder to find the fresh talent that it needs to remain relevant.

As the late Denis Jenkinson liked to suggest, the greatest driver in the world is probably sitting on a hillside in somewhere like the Himalayas, blissfully unaware of his (or her) gifts. The FIA Rally Star competition places equal emphasis on encouraging esports drivers as it does real-world talent, and as such it does at least broaden the net to countries with little organised motorsport.

Gaming was successfully exploited by Nissan's GT Academy, which picked former karters Lucas Ordonez and Jann Mardenborough for its endurance racing programme. The presence of modern-day gamers without racing experience was therefore an intriguing element when we gathered at Bicester Heritage to find the trio who will represent Britain at the European continental final in Germany.

The 18 contenders were tested on their car handling, physical fitness and media friendliness throughout the day, representing as wide an array of young hopefuls as this journalist has ever encountered. They were all a pleasure to talk to, not least for their unalloyed love of the sport, whether they have experienced it in competition, virtually or by being out on the stages spectating with family members.

In fact, the only interviewee not obviously bowled over by the opportunity and the magnitude of the prize was Junior Saloon champion and McLaren junior driver Katie Milner, even though her dad Jonny is a double British rally champion. But boy did Milner, the only woman in the contest, show what winning meant from behind the wheel.

She was right on the pace alongside 2019 Young Rally Driver of the Year, Robert Wilson, and they will go to Germany as genuine contenders for the European prize drive. In pure performance terms there were several drivers of similar ability, all able to complete the autosolo tests in their sleep. For others it may prove to be the most complex driving challenge that they will ever face.

Watching on from the sidelines in Bicester was none other than Junior BRC frontrunner Ruairi Bell, supporting his mate Axel. It turns out that Axel is a gamer who edits Bell's social media videos and is desperate to try the sport for himself. To my mind, he was the sort of entrant that the FIA was thinking of when it created Rally Star, rather than those with four or five times the career mileage that Bell himself has accumulated to date…

The third entrant to go through to Germany was #RallyAtHome esports racer John Bebnowicz-Harris, who had only just passed his driving test in order to take part on the day. Despite the autosolo Vauxhall being only the second car that he'd ever driven, Bebnowicz-Harris was a shoo-in among the gamers.

The esports element brought some very dedicated novices with commendably high skill across the board, although the timesheets illustrated a gulf between the two worlds.

Supporting Wilson, Milner and Bebnowicz-Harris will be a feature of our coverage this winter not only because the FIA Rally Star represents a colossal prize for the winner, but also the chance to break a particularly cruel wheel for aspiring talent. For years, similar awards for racing and rallying have been the preserve of the sport's old boy network and one driver who springs to mind as having suffered as an 'outsider' in this respect is none other than nine-time WRC champion Sebastien Loeb.

The French motorsport body, the FFSA, has always been proactive in nurturing young talent, but rallying is very much a sport based in the sun-kissed Cote d'Azur where everyone knows each other. Loeb, a blue-collar electrican's apprentice from the wet and windy north, beat everyone by a mile in the FFSA's Rally Jeunes talent contest, but watched the award being handed to one of the local lads anyway. Left to the FFSA, Loeb would still be working on a building site today.

The French example is by no means unique, as many frustrated British talents will attest from similar experiences. Was the FIA Rally Star selection flawless? No, but even if it wasn't perfect it was still the healthiest and most inclusive competition of its kind yet seen.

For that, Motorsport UK and the FIA should be applauded - let the good work continue.

Autosolo was reminiscent of Colin McRae Rally game

"Left to the FFSA, Sebastien Loeb would still be working on a building site…"

Advertising enquiries: 01732 446757

WALTER HAYES TROPHY REPORT

IN BRIEF

White's alright
Defending Walter Hayes Trophy winner Oli White didn't feel that he quite had the pace to win this time, but managed to take second in the final to compensate him somewhat for his Festival disappointment. White told MN: "It just panned out better [than the races earlier in the event]; I was a bit more aggressive as well. Shame it wasn't one lap longer because I was right behind Max, but he deserves it [to win]."

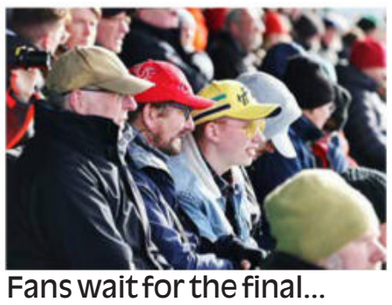
Felix's fightback
Felix Fisher, like White, a regular Castle Combe FF1600 frontrunner, had a spectacular comeback effort after his clutch exploded when running second in his heat. He won both Sunday morning's progression race and last chance race and finished the final 10th. He told MN: "It's been a cracking day. My rear rollbar snapped in the semi-final on lap four and I still managed to go from 27th to ninth. I passed 86 cars today."

Brother in arms
Felix's brother Josh, a multiple Hayes podium finisher and three-time Combe FF1600 champion, also impressed. He was immediately on the pace in his first racing of 2021, and finished the final fifth, within a second of victory, despite a semi-final clash with Rory Smith. "To be pointing backwards in the semi-final to end up fighting for the win, I'm chuffed with that," Josh told MN.

Mitchell mixes it
Historics ace Ben Mitchell this year has sampled modern FF1600 machinery, and was another from Combe's championship to impress at the Hayes. Like Wayne Poole Racing team-mate Josh Fisher, he was at the sharp end throughout, and Mitchell got third in the final. "I went into it with not many expectations," he told MN. "The car was fantastic. I just managed to make it stick to take Middlehurst, over the moon."

Trouble at Mills
Young gun Tom Mills had another frustrating event, as part of a difficult Hayes for his Kevin Mills Racing team. He had a spin in his heat, then got a 13-second penalty after his semi-final as he got the blame for an incident that pitched Matt Cowley and Joey Foster into spins. This dropped him to 23rd on the final's grid, and he finished the final an eventful 19th.

Made to wait
The final was delayed by over half an hour amid disciplinary actions from the semi-finals impacting the race's starting order. In addition to Mills' sanction, eighth-place finisher in the second semi-final Ian Campbell was disqualified for a clash with Jack Wolfenden, letting Joe Watts onto the back of the final's grid.



Fans wait for the final...

American dream: Esterson triumphs

RACE WINNERS

- **Heat 1** Max Esterson (Ray GR18)
- **Heat 2:** Chris Middlehurst (Van Diemen LA10)
- **Heat 3:** Michael Moyers (Spectrum 011)
- **Heat 4:** Josh Fisher (Van Diemen VD99)
- **Progression race:** Felix Fisher (Ray GR05)
- **Last chance race:** Felix Fisher (Ray GR05)
- **Semi-final 1:** Max Esterson (Ray GR18)
- **Semi-final 2:** Michael Moyers (Spectrum 011)
- **Final:** Max Esterson (Ray GR18)

MAXWELL'S FULL HOUSE AT THE HAYES

Young American is the starman of the 2021 Walter Hayes Trophy, winning all his races including the all-important final, as Graham Keilloh explains

The 2021 Walter Hayes Trophy winner Max Esterson summed up his weekend crisply to Motorsport News: "Qualified first, won the heat, won the semi and led every lap of the final."

It is in the nature of Walter Hayes Trophies to be unpredictable; Formula Fords on Silverstone's national layout lending themselves to frenzied pack racing. But Esterson, driving with the storied Team USA Scholarship and Low Dempsey Racing, this time came as close to dominance as this event allows. From the weekend's outset he looked the one to beat, and in the end no-one could.

"Couldn't be any better, the car was just on rails," Esterson continued. "The past two weeks I've just been on fire. I think I was quickest at the Festival on raw pace in the dry, and quickest here pretty much every session.

"The team's been hard at work on the car, done a lot of work to them to make them quick. And I've just been in good form."

And in 19-year-old Esterson's racing in the National Formula Ford 1600 championship this year, he's developed quite a knack at Silverstone. "It's my sixth race here this year and I've won five," he explained. "I'm really good in the last sector particularly. It just clicks."

As noted, last week in the Formula Ford Festival Esterson reckoned he was fastest, but running used tyres in the semi-final gave him just too much to do in the final starting 13th. This time, at the Hayes, Esterson appeared to be leaving nothing to chance. It was a virtuoso performance.

"He's been the man to beat in the dry all week," said Esterson's LDR team boss Andy Low to MN. "So we had him backed for the win.

"He's fantastic, he listens, he understands when he gets told off, his raw speed's really good, and he's just a good guy. We knew he had the pace, he had his head in the right space and we got the job done, so really proud of him.

"You never know with this event, it's so high pressure and high tension, and the level is so high, the National champion [was fighting for victory], there was multiple winners on the grid."

Esterson from pole led the final from the start, and looked to be making a break as those behind squabbled. And then they squabbled too hard as Kevin Mills Racing's Michael Moyers and B-M Racing's Rory Smith, disputing second place, collided at Luffield just before one-third distance.

The pair had divergent views on the clash, and on the build up to it. "It was so frustrating, you can see Max pulling away and all of us behind are all fighting and slowing each other down," double Hayes winner Moyers, who like Esterson had won his heat and semi-final, told MN. "I was thinking 'I can't be the only one here who thinks if we all work together we can catch him back up again?' Everyone was clearly on another planet.

"It was my corner," Moyers added on his clash with Smith, "I'd pushed him out wide two laps previous so he should have known that I was going to do it again. Very frustrating end to what

> ***"Couldn't be better; I've been on fire"***
>
> ***Max Esterson***

Middlehurst (42) led the pack chasing down leader Esterson

Photos: Jakob Ebrey

THE HAYES' RETURNING HERO

EXORCISING DEMONS: COLIN TURNER BACK AT THE WALTER HAYES TROPHY ONE YEAR ON

A familiar and friendly face was present in the Walter Hayes Trophy pits, in Colin Turner. And his presence was particularly significant.

The popular Scottish Formula Ford regular and former Royal Air Force pilot sustained life-changing injuries from last year's Walter Hayes Trophy event, having both legs amputated after getting caught in a multi-car pitstraight crash in wet conditions and spray.

One year on he was back at the Hayes, this time helping friend Neil Broome who was competing in a Ray GR17K. Broome set up the JustGiving page for Turner's post-treatment recovery, which raised close to £47,000 including support from Dario Franchitti and Allan McNish.

"It's absolutely fantastic, lovely to be back here, I've met all sorts of people," Turner told Motorsport News. "I was back here at The Classic in the middle of summer, and went round to the medical centre and got a chance to thank everybody round there. But this time I'm helping my friend Neil Broome who looked after me after the accident.

"So I'm looking after him as best I can round at the holding area, down at scrutineering so he can plug in the battery and get back – so it's great. I'm really enjoying it."

Broome continued to MN: "We said before the event that this time was about exorcising some of the demons rather than frantically chasing the results and we've done exactly what we wanted to do, we've had a great time.

"[Turner's had] just general spanner man duties. So he's on tyre pressures, torques, belts, GoPro, keeping an eye on the timing, then plus whatever other jobs we have to need doing. There's no concessions, this isn't disability motorsport. He's been working.

"He's been absolutely perfect and he's been, apart from anything else, a very good lucky talisman, because this is my sixth year here and the first time we've not split an engine and gearbox at some point."

Broome made it as far as the semi-final having progressed from the last chance race in 10th place. "Would have been nice to find another half a second," Broome said, "but that's always the way. Really happy to bring the car home shiny side up. Couldn't have wished for it to have gone any better."

And septuagenarian Turner at Silverstone confirmed that his desired return to racing remains on course. "I just want to get out in a car and start racing again," he said. "I've got a car getting rebuilt, a 2005 Ray with my old engine and old gearbox. That's about halfway through the rebuild.

Turner (r) was back at the event helping Broome

"I've jumped through some of the hoops with Motorsport UK to get my licence back, I'm just waiting to see a neurologist because I had a bleed on my brain. I've got to get clearance, and then I've got to go out with an ARDS instructor who can sign me off as being safe to be on the circuit: in other words, I'm in control of the vehicle. That's all. I don't have to go out with two pedals or three pedals or automatic or anything else.

"And I'm back on the road anyway, so I'm well on the way, I just need to get over the last few hurdles and then I'll be out hopefully next year. Anywhere north of Silverstone, I want to get back. As much as possible, or I should say as much I can afford – I'm a pensioner!

"And Nigel [Grant] here, they run a Merlyn Mk20 and they're determined to get me out in that. So I may end up back in my Ray, or I may end up going historics. Whichever floats my boat."

was a really good weekend up until then."

Smith said to MN: "Moyers was like a cork in the bottle really, and I knew I had to get by him and chase down Esterson. I think out of desperation he was doing his best to hold me behind. I definitely had the speed to win it.

"He just didn't leave me any room. My car was there, I can't vanish, and he turned into the corner like I wasn't there and I was. Damaged my car and that was it. It's a bit unacceptable. Can't race with stupid."

The upshot was that Esterson had an advantage of 1.4 seconds. "I thought I was gone," Esterson noted, "but just the slipstream's so big here that I knew they were going to catch up. I saw every lap they were coming closer. I was just hoping it [the gap] wouldn't close enough so that I would have to defend, but it did."

Indeed. The new second-place man, reigning National FF1600 champion Chris Middlehurst of Team Dolan, clawed Esterson in to be with him for the final four laps. And soon a few others were on Middlehurst's tail, too.

"[Slipstreaming is] not my favourite type of racing to be honest," Esterson added, "but I can manage it well. I was good on the back straight, so it made my life easier, I didn't have to defend too hard."

He also got a crucial break before the last-lap dive into Brooklands, the habitual scene of Hayes do-or-die manoeuvres particularly at the final's last. "Chris almost got by me into Turn 2 but I held him off," Esterson recalled, "and he missed a shift down the back straight so that gave me a bit of breathing room."

It meant Esterson took the flag first, and meant further that Middlehurst dropped to fourth on the last lap behind last year's Hayes winner Oli White in his Souley Motorsport Medina plus Combe FF1600 competitor and historic racer Ben Mitchell in his Wayne Poole Racing Van Diemen.

Middlehurst mused to MN: "My mistake, but it would have been hard to have got past him to be fair. I would have given it a bloody good go.

"Good weekend overall, fourth was still OK but I'd have liked to have won it, I think the pace was there. So of course I'm just gutted. You've got a lot going on around you, in your mirrors, looking ahead, just snatched a gear and missed it. It went in, but just lost momentum.

"[It was] exciting, I felt I could reel him [Esterson] in and get past him. I raced him in the semi-finals so I knew where he was strong and where he wasn't. Just couldn't quite make the move stick. Oh well, try again next year."

SUPPORT RACES

Samuel Harrison emerged triumphant from two thrilling contests to take the Carl Hamer Trophy for Pre-'82 Formula Fords on his first appearance in the Classic Team Merlyn Mk20.

Harrison led much of Saturday's pre-final, but 2017 and '19 winner Richard Tarling (Jamun T2) and Henry Chart (Van Diemen RF81) played their part in a three-way fight. The hopes of the latter two were thwarted on the final lap at Copse when Chart's car jumped out of gear then spun, delaying Tarling and promoting the Crossle 35F of Patrick McKenna onto the podium.

Sunday's main race was even more intense, although Chart faded into retirement. In his stead McKenna played a starring role, driving around the outside of Tarling and Harrison to take the lead at Brooklands on lap one.

Harrison and Tarling were soon back ahead, but delayed each other at Luffield at two-thirds' distance to briefly allow the Merlyn Mk20A of Ed Thurston to lead. Harrison was ahead approaching Brooklands on the final lap where Tarling made a move that seemed destined to give him the victory, but Harrison outdragged him through Woodcote. Thurston and McKenna were next in third and fourth while, a couple of seconds behind, ex-BTCC man Warren Hughes got the better of Rick Morris on the final lap.

Northern Irish teenager Brandon McCaughan won the Pre-'93 final for the Janet Cesar Trophy in an equally thrilling contest. He climbed from a row-six start in the pre-final to finish third in his Mondiale M89S, then took the lead of the final around the outside at Copse just before half distance. Saturday winner James Tucker (Van Diemen RF92) didn't give up, getting ahead of McCaughan at Brooklands two laps later. But when the pack arrived there on the penultimate tour McCaughan emerged in front with Tucker slipping to the back of the group. Ben Tinkler, in his Reynard 89FF, grabbed second back from Cam Jackson's Van Diemen RF90 on the dash to the line. The latter's event was compromised when nudged into a spin by McCaughan near the end of the pre-final, forcing him to start the final from row 10.

George Line (Dallara F308) won both Monoposto contests, with closest challenger Robbie Watts finishing the first race in the Luffield gravel. Ben Powney (Jedi Mk6/7) fended off Lee Fern's Dallara F301 for second in race one and, although he finished well behind Fern in race two, likely did enough for the Tiedeman Trophy.

Ian Sowman

RACE WINNERS

■ **HSCC Allcomers Closed Wheel**
Race 1: Tony Hunter (Renault Clio)
Race 2: Chris Porritt (Chevron B19)

■ **Janet Cesar Trophy (Pre '93 cars)**
Pre-final: James Tucker (Van Diemen RF92)
Final: Brandon McCaughan (Mondiale M89S)

■ **Carl Hamer Trophy (Pre '82)**
Pre-final & final: Samuel Harrison (Merlyn Mk20)

■ **Monoposto Tiedeman Trophy**
Races 1 & 2: George Line (Dallara F308)

■ **Production Endurance**
Timothy Creswick (Porsche Cayman GT4 Clubsport)

Harrison (c) took both Carl Hamer Trophy Pre '82 race wins

RESULTS

Walter Hayes Trophy Final 2021
Laps: 15 **Track:** Silverstone

POS.	DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Max Esterson	Ray GR18	15m31.122s
2	Oli White	Medina JL17	+0.249s
3	Ben Mitchell	Van Diemen JL16	+0.638s
4	Chris Middlehurst	Van Diemen LA10	+0.844s
5	Josh Fisher	Van Diemen VD99	+0.972s
6	Lucas Romanek	Van Diemen JL13	+1.083s
7	Joey Foster	Firman RFR21	+4.264s
8	Matt Cowley	Van Diemen RF15	+4.334s
9	David Mccullough	Van Diemen RF00	+7.563s
10	Felix Fisher	Ray GR05	+9.857s

Esterson celebrates

11 Megan Gilkes (Spectrum KMR) +10.256s; 12 David McArthur (Medina BH19) +10.346s; 13 Ben Cochran (Van Diemen BD21) +10.518s; 14 27 14 Ivor Mccullough (Van Diemen RF00) +12.800s; 15 Logan Hannah (Ray GR14) +14.771s; 16 Luke Cooper (Swift SC20) +15.171s; 17 Lewis Fox (Ray GR14) +15.719s; 18 Callum Grant (Van Diemen RF08) +16.164s; 19 Tom Mills (Spectrum KMR) +17.301s; 20 Nick Gilkes (Spectrum KMR) +18.207s; 21 Michael Gray (Ray GR10) +20.657s; 22 James Tucker (Van Diemen RF92) +21.070s; 23 Ben Tinkler (Reynard 89FF) +21.261s; 24 Kieran Attwood (Ray GR07) +22.015s; 25 Brandon McCaughan (Mondiale M89S) +22.111s; 26 James Hadfield (Van Diemen RF03) +22.396s; 27 Jordan Harrison (Reynard 89FF) +22.873s; 28 Ian Gough (Van Diemen JL13) +23.770s; 29 Michael Moyers (Spectrum 011) +25.619s; 30 Nathan Ward (Swift SC92) +28.058s*; 31 Benn Tilley (Van Diemen RF86) +30.919s; 32 Joe Watts (Van Diemen RF92) +30.951s; R Jonathan McMullan (Van Diemen LA10) 6 Laps; R Rory Smith (Medina Sport) 5 Laps; R James Clarke (Van Diemen RF99) 3 Laps; R 21 Andre Castro (Ray GR14) 2 Laps. **Class winner:** Tucker. **Pole position:** Esterson. **Fastest Lap:** Cowley 1m01.321s (96.30mph). **Winner's average speed:** 95.13mph.
*Five-second penalty for track limits

Esterson beat a five-strong pack to the Hayes final chequered flag

Moyers and Smith collided at Luffield in the final battling for second

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BUTCHER SLAUGHTERS THEM AT SILVERSTONE
Toyota man doubles up as Sutton zeroes in on BTCC crown P28
SEPTEMBER 30 2021 ■ EVERY THURSDAY ■ £3.99 ■ FORMERLY MOTORING NEWS
Landmark result for Merc's star as he denies Norris a maiden win
LEWIS HAILS A MAGICAL MOMENT AS HE HITS A CENTURY
By Matt James
Lewis Hamilton has hailed his rivals after landing his 100th grand prix win in Russia on Sunday, snatching the victory from fellow Brit Lando Norris.
From pole position, McLaren man Norris seemed set to take his maiden victory until a late rain shower left him slithering off the circuit. Hamilton had been called in by his Mercedes team and swapped tyres. He was able to hunt down Norris and take the race win in the dying moments.
Hamilton, who finished one place ahead of his title rival Max Verstappen, says the 100-win benchmark is something he finds hard to believe.
The seven-time champion said: "It's a magical moment. I could only ever have dreamed of still being here and having this opportunity to win these races and get to drive against such phenomenal talent this late in my career and to continue to building with Mercedes. I'm so proud of everything we've done, not only on track but also off."
Full report, p4
Special feature: Lewis's best wins p30
Lewis has achieved his big target
Hamilton left it late to pounce for his 100th win
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COLUMNIST

BOBBY THOMPSON

Tin-top up-and-comer on his burning passion to get back to the top table

Photos: Jakob Ebrey

Essex racer led at Brands Hatch

Thompson enjoyed late Mini outings

I walked away from 2021 with a race-winning trophy, but it certainly wasn't the one I thought I might have a shot of earning at the start of this season. Winning a Mighty Mini round at Brands Hatch in August was very nice, but it hadn't been on my radar at the beginning of the year.

I had my sights on returning to the British Touring Car Championship for 2021. I had been in the BTCC for nearly three seasons until my 2020 campaign was stopped by a shunt at Croft when I was driving the Trade Price Cars Audi S3. I was getting into my swing with that car and it came at the wrong moment. I suffered concussion and had to sit out the remainder of the campaign.

We were working hard in the background and it seemed like it would be a green light to make a BTCC return at the beginning of this year but, one by one, by backers all started looking shaky. From having something firmly in my sights, I began to realise that it might not happen at all.

I had to change my mindset and realised that I would have to focus on my coaching and do any races that came my way. I look after about 30 different people which means that pretty much every day of the week I am in a race car somewhere helping guys to unlock pace from themselves.

When things like that happen and you lose backing, it gives you a different perspective on racing and it makes you realise that there are so many good drivers out there who are just sat on their bums doing nothing. You also realise that there are a lot of drivers out there racing that maybe shouldn't be. But what can you do? You have to knuckle down and play the game as it is set out. I am still young and there is still plenty to push for. It is hard not coming from money when you are trying to take part in a rich man's sport, and that is something that me and my dad Paul talk about a lot.

Standing on the podium at Brands after winning at the Mini Festival in August was a great thing. The guys running the Super Mighty Minis wanted to promote their series a bit and I got the chance of a free race. To win the first race there from pole was just the icing on the cake. I got my eye back in and it was really good run.

Then I got the chance to take part in the Mini Challenge too, on the BTCC support bill for the last two rounds of the year with the JamSport team. I have got a customer called Darren Leung and he was nice enough to fund the majority of those Mini Challenge races for me. He believes in me and he wants me to get back into the BTCC paddock too before maybe we go into GTs together at some point.

I had a few technical problems at Donington Park with a puncture and a driveshaft failure but I had showed I was quick. I showed it again at Brands too and was leading the race that was live on ITV until I had another driveshaft failure going into Stirling's just as I had grabbed the lead.

I think I was able to show the pace I had and hopefully that will give me the springboard I need to get back into the British Touring Car Championship. It is hard finding budget at the moment. There are some positive conversations with backers and we are in talks with a couple of BTCC teams.

There could be a lot of seats vacant over the winter with drivers leaving the championship or swapping teams, so the chances are there. All I know is that I have the hunger to be back there and I have a winter of hard work in front of me to draw it all together. Far from sitting idle over the next few months, the graft of being a racing driver starts now. I am going to meet it head on.

Thompson (left) was a winner in Mighty Minis

"I want to bounce straight back into the British Touring Car Championship"

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RACING REPORTS

Photos: Gary Hawkins

BRANDS HATCH: BARC BY BRIAN PHILLIPS — NOVEMBER 6-7

Smith came out top in a tense truck finale

Charlie Hand topped the Junior Saloon battlers in the brace of Brands races

Dendy won two truncated Hyundai Coupe races

SMITH POWERS BACK TO THE FRONT FOR TITLE

Ryan Smith overcame a points deficit to successfully defend his Truck Racing Championship title for the sixth year in a row on Sunday, but after a season hit by reliability problems he said the victory meant more to him than any apart from the unforgettable first.

On paper, with four wins to his name out of five races, it looked a simple task for Smith, but champion David Jenkins never gave up after coming to Brands with a narrow lead over Martin Gibson and Smith. They went into a tense finale with Smith holding a single point advantage over his rival. Gibson was out of the reckoning by this time after a disqualification for overspeeding.

With Smith's Mercedes out in the lead, the key moment came when Jenkins tried to take second place from Mark Taylor and bundled Taylor off at Surtees, only to be clobbered by the errant truck as it rejoined from a trip across the grass. Multiple champion Stuart Oliver was a spectator for much of the weekend after retiring from the first race with overheating. This was later diagnosed as a cracked cylinder head on the Volvo.

Things were less tense in the Division 2 title chase, which was wrapped up on Saturday by Craig Reid in his Iveco ahead of local publican Steven Powell.

Six typically close-fought Legends races over the two days resulted in Miles Rudman securing the national title, helped by steady scoring rather than outright success.

The Midlander had one win on his way to clinching the crown, other wins going to champion John Mickel twice, Sean Smith, Will Gibson and Dan Clark.

Even though he wasn't completely sure of the Junior Saloons championship before the weekend, Charlie Hand had only missed the podium at one event all year. He duly completed his triumphant season with two more wins while Harvey Caton, the only driver with a chance of overhauling his rival, had a miserable first race.

Pickup Truck racer George Turiccki was another driver on the brink of a second title, having won in 2019 before the 2020 season was written off. He stayed out of trouble, finishing fifth and second in a pair of races. David O'Regan, a rare contender this year, won both races on the road although a track limits penalty in race one relegated him and promoted Dean Tompkins to first.

Two Classic Touring Club handicap races produced plenty of excitement on the track but confusion on the timing screens, due to the application of credit laps.

Mike Saunders' Mk1 Escort, Rod Birley (BMW M3), Gary Prebble (Honda Civic), Malcolm Harding (Escort) and the shared Rikki Cann/Samuel Wilson Aston Martin V8 were the main protagonists, Saunders and Harding taking a win each on the road.

Both Hyundai Coupe races were curtailed by red flags, but in both of them Alistair Dendy beat this year's most successful driver, Alex Cursley. Wayne Rockett kept them company in race one but had to follow son Jonny in the second encounter.

RACE WINNERS

Truck Racing Championship
Races 1, 2, 3 & 5: Ryan Smith (Mercedes Actros); **Race 4:** David Jenkins (MAN TGX)

Legends Championship
Saturday, race 1: Sean Smith; **Race 2:** Will Gibson; **Race 3:** John Mickel; **Sunday, race 1:** Miles Rudman; **Race 2:** Dan Clark; **Race 3:** Mickel

Junior Saloons
Races 1 & 2: Charlie Hand

Pickup Trucks
Race 1: Dean Tompkins; **Race 2:** David O'Regan

Allcomers
Race 1: Scott Kirwan (Renault Clio); **Race 2:** Colin Claxton (Ford Escort Mk1)

Hyundai Coupe Cup
Races 1 & 2: Alistair Dendy

DONINGTON PARK: BRSCC BY ADAM WELLER — NOVEMBER 6

BRITISH GT CHAMPIONSHIP STARS PROVE THEIR CLASS WITH ANOTHER RACE VICTORY AT DONINGTON PARK

The final race of the 2021 Fun Cup Endurance Championship provided the runners with a return to Donington Park.

The random grid draw put several frontrunning teams starting at the sharp end. The rapid Team Greenheath car was awarded pole, while the Enduro Motorsport entry of British GT winners Morgan Tillbrook and Marcus Clutton joined them on the front row. The 2020 champion, Team Olympian, would line-up third, while the CCS Media Racing entry would start fourth with the rapid Nigel Greensall at the helm.

Predictably, it was that group that broke away and battled in the early stages, while a long train of cars covered the rest of the top dozen a few seconds further back. One such car was the 2021 championship-winning UVio/Hoffman's Lotus entry, that had started from the rear as is customary for the Fun Cup championship leader.

As the first pitstops neared 40 minutes into the race, the Team Olympian starting driver Chris Dovell made contact with the GT Radial entry of Ellis Hadley. Dovell ended up in the gravel at McLean's, and out of contention.

This brought out the first of five safety cars and, upon the return to racing, the plotline for the race emerged; a battle between the PLR Racing entry, as well as the aforementioned UVio and Enduro Motorsport crews, and intermittent short showers causing recurring bedlam.

Heading into the final 40 minutes, it appeared that the UVio crew and driver Fabio Randaccio were home free. However, a mistake during a short rainy spell at an oily Old Hairpin sent the car off-track, and left it with front splitter damage.

This would soon open the door for Clutton to take the lead for Enduro Motorsport, a position he would hold until the flag. Meanwhile, Randaccio would do battle with PLR's Neil Plimmer for second, which ended with contact at the final chicane. Plimmer would continue – albeit receiving a penalty for his role in the collision – while Randaccio would go no further.

The late-stage dramas allowed MakeHappen Racing's Greg Evans and Neil Burroughs to take second, ahead of MJ Tec GITI's Scott Jeffs and series debutant Callum Cripps.

In the Ford ST-XR Challenge, Chris Jones did just enough to take the title in the dusk of the second race. He claimed victory, with title rival Michael Blackburn taking third. Chris Grimes had a solid weekend, taking the win in the first race, and splitting the title contenders in race two.

RACE WINNERS

Fun Cup
Enduro Motorsport (Marcus Clutton/Morgan Tillbrook)

ST-XR Challenge
Race 1: Chris Grimes (Ford Fiesta ST); **Race 2:** Chris Jones (Ford Fiesta ST)

WHAT'S ON

YOUTUBE

This week in Motorsport News we hail Dennis Lind, our inaugural National Racing Driver of The Year who has thrilled us throughout this British GT season.

And YouTube has plenty to help you supplement the words with footage. Barwell boss Mark Lemmer cited Lind in 2019's Barcelona 24 hours as key in awakening him to his talent and, should you have 24 hours to spare, you can actually watch the whole thing on YouTube over five parts on the 24H Series' channel. The first bit is at: youtube.com/watch?v=AH3fUjMhotE or you can search for 'Hankook 24H Barcelona 2019'.

If though you'd prefer something more bite sized then you can watch anything from Lind's British GT championship season this year, in full or highlight form, on the GT World channel. Our recommendation is Brands Hatch's season opener, wherein Lind laid down his marker with his stunning charge in the second half of the race after a pitstop delay. Look out in particular for his scintillating three-wide pass of Yelmer Buurman's RAM Mercedes.

You can watch the whole two-hour race – with our very own David Addison on commentary – at: youtube.com/watch?v=3SqYJcqy7xw or via searching 'LIVE | British GT - Brands Hatch - R1'.

Graham Keilloh

Lind has won the MN award

TV GUIDE

Brazil 2003 will be shown on Sky Sports

LIVE TV

FORMULA 1 BRAZILIAN GRAND PRIX INTERLAGOS

Practice 1: Friday, 1500hrs-1645hrs, Sky Sports F1

Qualifying: Friday, 1800hrs-2030hrs, Sky Sports F1

Practice 2: Saturday, 1445hrs-1610hrs, Sky Sports F1

Sprint qualifying: Saturday, 1830hrs-2100hrs, Sky Sports F1

Race: Sunday, 1530hrs-2000hrs (start time 1700hrs), Sky Sports F1

Sky Sports F1 treats us this Brazilian Grand Prix weekend by showing several races from the event's rich and madcap history. It starts off today (Thursday) with the very madcap damp 2003 race in full starting at 1330hrs. Then it's the through-the-looking-glass 2007 title finale, again in full, from 1545hrs, followed at 1745hrs by home hero Ayrton Senna's 1993 tour de force. And tomorrow there are more Senna-hailing highlights from 1991, at 1700hrs-1800hrs.

There's more on Saturday between the live sessions, with first highlights of the 1984 race, at 1645hrs, followed at 1730hrs by 1986's best bits; later that evening there's all of the 2012 season-closer starting at 2145hrs. While in Sunday's early hours it's all of 2009's title decider, starting at 0130hrs.

The channel's coverage of this weekend's latest Brazilian GP starts in the usual way today with The F1 Show, at 1930hrs-2030hrs, then the drivers' press conference. And as this is the latest weekend with 'sprint qualifying' Ted Kravitz has three Notebooks: one post qualifying tomorrow at 2030hrs-2100hrs, another post Saturday's sprint qualifying at 2100hrs-2130hrs and the usual post-race one at 2000hrs-2030hrs on Sunday.

Channel 4's qualifying highlights are at 2320hrs-0050hrs on Saturday while its race show is on Sunday at 2300hrs-0130hrs.

Graham Keilloh

LISTINGS

SATURDAY-SUNDAY

Anglesey, N Wales

Race of Remembrance: 12-hour endurance race, Clubsport Trophy **Starts** Saturday, racing from 1215hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Sunday, racing from 0900hrs **Admission** £15 **Web** angleseycircuit.com

Brands Hatch, Kent

BARC meeting: Britcar, Minis, Citroen C1s, Ginetta Junior, Silhouettes, Super Saloons/Tin Tops **Starts** Saturday, racing from 1055hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Sunday, racing from 1205hrs (qualifying from 1000hrs) **Admission** adult £14, under 13 free **Web** msv.com **Contact** 0843 453 9000

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ART EDITOR MIKE STOKOE'S FAVOURITE OF THE WEEK!

Stephen Messenger snapped this gorgeous Ford Capri

Rallycross, from Alex Ireland

Brands BTCC action, from Dean Chilvers

Electric racer, from Rich Cranston

Rallying icon, from Richard Salisbury

NEXT WEEK — OUT THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 18

*Correct at time of going to press

EXCLUSIVE Q&A
ARI VATANEN
World Rally king tackles the Motorsport News readers' questions

INSIGHT
HOW THE BRITISH GT SERIES HAS EVOLVED

Reflecting on the history of one of UK racing's biggest successes

NORTHERN IRELAND'S HIGHLIGHT

We look at the magic of the Ulster Rally

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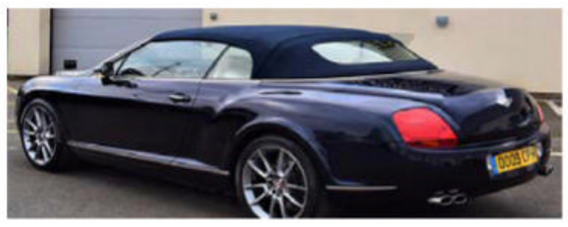

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